

# ANCIENT CHINESE ART

THE ERNEST ERICKSON COLLECTION



THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
NEW YORK

# ANCIENT CHINESE ART





No. 8

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THE ERNEST ERICKSON COLLECTION  
IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

MAXWELL K. HEARN

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
NEW YORK

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# PREFACE

China is a vast and populous country, moving rapidly on all fronts to prepare itself for life in the twenty-first century. Heir to a resplendent ancient culture, modern China is following a unique developmental path that evolves from this long and rich cultural tradition. Our understanding of the transformations in China today must be predicated upon an appreciation of this precious cultural legacy.

The challenge for The Metropolitan Museum of Art is to represent this colossal culture by the coherent display of aesthetic masterpieces that recapture the great moments of China's past. Collections such as that at the Metropolitan have grown under generations of collectors, curators, and changing fashions. As awareness and scholarship deepen, our museums must raise technical and educational support to meet increasingly sophisticated standards.

Brooke Astor, Douglas Dillon, Mary Burke, and others have taken up this challenge in recent years with energetic leadership. As passionate admirers of China's ancient aesthetic traditions, my family and I have embraced this challenge with support for the enlargement and installation of the Museum's expanding collection of ancient Chinese art. As the Museum prepares to open these new galleries, the gift of the Erickson Collection is especially timely. The Erickson Collection contains works of outstanding quality that range through different media and across the whole span of ancient China, from the Neolithic to the T'ang period.

Ernest Erickson, through his collection, has created a vital memorial that fills in gaps in the Museum's existing holdings. We are honored and privileged to help present this wonderful gift, commemorated by this catalogue.

Charlotte C. Weber





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# FOREWORD

This catalogue commemorates a major gift of Chinese art to The Metropolitan Museum of Art from the collection of the late Ernest Erickson. Coming at a time when the Metropolitan has begun plans for a new display of Chinese arts of the Neolithic through the T'ang periods, this gift significantly augments the Museum's existing holdings and will occupy an important place in the forthcoming permanent installation.

Born in Finland in 1893, Ernest Erickson immigrated to the United States at the age of thirty, rising from laborer and technician in paper mills in Canada and the U.S. to the presidency of the Pulp Sales Corporation, a company that marketed Finnish wood pulp in North America. While pursuing a successful business career, Mr. Erickson developed a lifelong passion for art. In addition to his preeminent Chinese holdings, he created distinguished collections of North, Middle, and South American Indian art, Egyptian and Near Eastern antiquities, Indian and Southeast Asian sculpture, and Indonesian textiles. Assembled over the course of more than fifty years, his various collections numbered more than 1,700 objects at the time of his death in 1983.

The 150 Chinese works presented to the Metropolitan Museum by the Erickson Foundation in 1985 epitomize Mr. Erickson's approach to collecting. Encyclopedic in its coverage of more than three millennia of Chinese culture, the collection bespeaks a discriminating taste for the unusual, humorous, or experimental as well as the beautiful. Erickson's pieces have personality; each one, whether an exquisite jade pendant or a humble horse trapping, exercises an irresistible pull on the imagination, capturing some essential attribute of the culture, the artist, or the creative process. Although Erickson built an extensive library and often turned to dealers and curators for advice, authenticity alone was not his ultimate criterion for acquiring a piece. Nor did he compete with institutions or other private collectors for pieces of monumental scale. Erickson's pieces tend to be small—objects that can be held comfortably in one hand—but they speak with a clarity and quality of voice out of all proportion to their size.

Erickson's encyclopedic approach to art reflects his belief in and commitment to preserving and communicating the character of another culture through its objects. Not long before his death he wrote:

As a student of Chinese art for over fifty years, I have assembled my collection of Chinese antiquities with the strong conviction that this material is of importance not only for its intrinsic aesthetic qualities, but for its value in helping Westerners to better understand another culture. For this reason, and as part of my social conscience, I have felt it essential that I share these things with the widest possible audience.

A member of the Department of Asian Art Visiting Committee of the Museum from 1972 to 1983, Mr. Erickson not only wished to assist in "strengthening the museum's growing collection in those areas where it needs help most," but he also believed that his collection could "best serve the field and the New York area at large when it is installed in the permanent galleries at the Metropolitan." Although Mr. Erickson did not live to see the new galleries of ancient Chinese art, which will open in 1988, his gift has significantly shaped and enriched that installation so that, through his objects, his vision of collecting will permanently enhance our appreciation of the Chinese past.

Philippe de Montebello  
Director

# CHRONOLOGY

HSIA DYNASTY		21st c.–16th c. B.C.
Period of Erh-li-t'ou culture	19th c.–16th c. B.C.	
SHANG DYNASTY		16th c.–11th c. B.C.
Period of Erh-li-kang culture (Cheng-chou phase)	16th c.–14th c. B.C.	
Period of Yin-hsü culture (An-yang phase)	13th c.–11th c. B.C.	
CHOU DYNASTY		11th c.–256 B.C.
Western Chou	11th c.–771 B.C.	
Eastern Chou	770–256 B.C.	
Spring and Autumn period	770–476 B.C.	
Warring States period	475–221 B.C.	
CH'IN DYNASTY		221–206 B.C.
HAN DYNASTY		206 B.C.–A.D. 220
Western Han dynasty	206 B.C.–A.D. 9	
Wang Mang interregnum	A.D. 9–23	
Eastern Han dynasty	25–220	
THE SIX DYNASTIES PERIOD		220–589
The Three Kingdoms period	220–280	
Wu (220–280) Shu (221–263) Wei (220–265)		
Western and Eastern Chin dynasty	265–420	
Northern and Southern dynasties	386–581	
Northern Wei	386–535	
Eastern Wei	534–550	
Western Wei	535–557	
Northern Ch'i	550–577	
Northern Chou	557–581	
(Liu) Sung	420–479	
Southern Ch'i	479–502	
Liang	502–557	
Ch'en	557–589	
SUI DYNASTY		581–618
T'ANG DYNASTY		618–906
THE FIVE DYNASTIES PERIOD		907–960
LIAO DYNASTY		907–1125
SUNG DYNASTY		960–1279
Northern Sung dynasty	960–1127	
Southern Sung dynasty	1127–1279	
YÜAN DYNASTY		1260–1368
MING DYNASTY		1368–1644
CH'ING DYNASTY		1644–1911

# ANCIENT CHINESE ART



No. 58 (detail)



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# INTRODUCTION

The recent gift of 150 Chinese works of art from the collection of the late Ernest Erickson marks a new chapter in the history of Chinese art at the Metropolitan Museum. The holdings of the Museum's Department of Asian Art are uniquely identified with leading New York collectors and benefactors, and the Erickson gift, presented to the Museum in 1985 as the Department marked its seventieth anniversary, is particularly valuable in the way it complements and extends the Museum's previous holdings. It is also a striking example of how a single individual's taste can shape the character of an institution and help to define its unique strengths.

Chinese art began to be collected at the Metropolitan in 1879 with the purchase of a collection of Chinese and Japanese ceramics from Samuel P. Avery, one of the Museum's first trustees. In 1902, the Museum received a major gift of more than one thousand pieces of jade from Heber R. Bishop; Benjamin Altman presented the Museum with his extensive collection of Ch'ing ceramics in 1913; and a gift of ceramics, bronzes, and other objects came from J. Pierpont Morgan in 1917.

This early interest in Oriental art among New York collectors led to the creation of a separate Department of Far Eastern Art in 1915 under the supervision of S. C. Bosch Reitz. (The Department changed its name to Asian Art in 1986.) With the help of the missionary-scholar John C. Ferguson, Bosch Reitz made a number of important Chinese acquisitions, including several major sculptures and the important Tuan Fang altar set of ritual bronzes. Nevertheless, the Museum fell far behind several of the major private collectors of the day, notably Charles Freer, who, in 1906, established the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and Grenville Winthrop, a New Yorker who eventually left his collection to Harvard University.

Alan Priest, the second curator of Asian Art, held his post for thirty-five years (1928–63). Priest made important acquisitions in the areas of Chinese Buddhist sculpture and textiles, but largely neglected ancient Chinese art, which grew mainly through the gifts of three important benefactors: the bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer in 1929, which included ceramics, sculptures, and one important bronze vessel; a choice group of Buddhist stone and gilt bronze sculptures presented by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in 1942; and a combined bequest and gift of bronze ritual vessels from Addie W. Kahn and her children in 1949. Except for a small group of ritual bronzes purchased in 1943 the Museum did little on its own to extend its holdings.

During the critical postwar years major collections of bronzes, jades, and early ceramics were being assembled by museums in Chicago, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Cleveland, and Washington as well as by such private collectors as Avery Brundage and Arthur Sackler. Between 1950 and 1970 the Museum added only twenty-five pieces of note in this area.

In an effort to encourage the support of private collectors and fill the many gaps in the Museum's collection, in 1973 the Department opened a long-term installation of early Chinese art accompanied by a special issue of the *Bulletin* entitled "The Arts of Ancient China" (vol. 32/2, Winter, 1973/1974). One result was that, in 1974, the Sackler Foundation enabled the Museum to acquire twenty-two choice objects from the



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auction of the Frederick Mayer Collection, including an important group of eighth-century T'ang silver vessels.

Since 1982, the Museum has begun a major effort to expand its holdings as well as to develop plans for a permanent installation of early Chinese art. This plan, which has gained key support from Charlotte and John Weber, calls for creating a chronological display of the varied arts of China from Neolithic times (about 2500 B.C.) through the T'ang dynasty (618–906), together with a display of later Buddhist monumental sculpture.

The gift of the Erickson Collection in 1985 came as a direct response to this new initiative. Mr. Erickson, who had served on the Department of Asian Art Visiting Committee since 1972, welcomed the Museum's new commitment and decided to support it through the gift of his Chinese collection. Although his death in 1983 prevented him from fulfilling his intention, his wishes have been carried out by the Ernest Erickson Foundation under the direction of Mr. Abraham S. Guterman.

The Erickson Collection is notable for its high quality, for the chronological breadth of its contents, and for the range of media represented. It not only fills many gaps in the existing collection, but it also goes a long way toward enabling the Museum to present an encyclopedic survey of all the high arts of ancient China.

The imposing ritual vessels of the Shang, Chou, and Han dynasties (16th c. B.C.–A.D. 220) form the core of any display of ancient Chinese art. The Metropolitan has important late Shang and early Chou pieces but is weak in early Shang, late Chou, and Han bronzes. The fourteen bronze vessels and sculptures in the Erickson Collection importantly enhance and extend the Museum's holdings.

The Erickson *ho* spouted wine vessel (no. 1, illustrated, page 14), dating to the period before the Shang capital moved to its final site at An-yang sometime in the thirteenth century B.C., has become the earliest Chinese bronze in the Museum's collection. Decorated with broad-band designs that feature two serpents whose conjoined heads and gaping jaws form the vessel spout, the *ho* has a shape and decor that closely parallel those of middle Shang vessels of the fourteenth century B.C.

Four late Shang vessels in the Erickson gift provide striking comparisons with bronzes already in the collection. A crisply cast *li-ting* cooking vessel (no. 6, illustrated, page 32) with a tri-lobed body and three columnar legs, while extending the Museum's coverage of tripod vessels, also illustrates an important typological variant to the basic *ting* tripod with a bowl-shaped body. A small *kuang*, covered wine vessel (no. 4, illustrated, page 30), is remarkable for its extensive use of turquoise inlay to describe the features of several dragonlike creatures on the vessel lid. The vessel, with its dense turquoise highlighting on an otherwise unornamented body, contrasts dramatically with another *kuang*, covered with animal designs cast in high relief, in the Museum's collection (43.25.4). Even more striking is the juxtaposition of the Erickson *fang-i* covered wine vessel (no. 2, illustrated, page 28) with the *fang-i* acquired from the Mayer Collection in 1974 (1974.268.2). In spite of their virtually identical size and shape, the decoration of the two vessels is entirely different. The Mayer piece shows an abstracted animal mask with features exploded into separate parts; the Erickson vessel, however, shows bovine and owl masks that are plastically modeled and vividly coherent. Finally, an imposing late Shang *yu* wine bucket (no. 8, illustrated, page 2) inscribed with a dedication to "Father I" demonstrates the persistence of classic Shang vessel types alongside a new, exuberant eleventh-century style exemplified by the two *yu* wine buckets belonging to the Museum's famous Tuan Fang altar set (24.72.2–3).

During the Eastern Chou period (770–256 B.C.) a new repertory of graceful vessel forms evolved. These vessels were cast with a sophisticated, all-over decoration of interwoven patterns that were often used in deliberate contrast to nearly naturalistic three-dimensional animal forms applied to vessel surfaces. Strengthening one of the weakest



areas in the Museum's collection, the Erickson gift includes two Eastern Chou vessels as well as three exceptional examples of late Chou sculptural art. A fantastic winged feline (no. 12, illustrated, page 17), originally made as an applied ornament for a vessel or other large-scale object, presents a delicate balance of abstract form and carefully observed naturalistic detail. It has the face, paws, tail, and sinewy body of a tiger, but its surface is covered with finely cast intaglio ornament that combines abstract arabesques with fin and feather motifs. The abstract body of the beast takes the shape of a tubular S-curve; in combination with the powerfully modeled legs and head, however, the serpentine torso imparts a sense of enormous, pent-up energy and potential movement to the creature's crouching pose. Even greater attention to naturalistic modeling is evident in a reclining feline (no. 13, illustrated, page 35) that once embellished the cover of an immense *ting* cauldron. Compared to the fantastic winged beast above, this animal's powerfully articulated body appears anatomically convincing. Even the abstract patterns that cover the surface of the feline's body serve to define and emphasize its musculature.

Representations of the human figure are extremely rare in early Chinese art; for this reason, the small bronze sculpture of a man (no. 49, illustrated, page 50) is a particularly important addition to the collection. The minutely observed figure provides a detailed look at Chou costume: the man wears a short robe secured around the waist by a belt from which hangs a dagger. The fact that he wears trousers and boots, items of Steppes dress first introduced into China around the fifth century B.C., may mean that he represents a northern nomad rather than a Han Chinese. Although the articles the man once held in his hands are now missing, a similar figure in the Freer Gallery balances a bear on a pole, making it likely that the Erickson figure, too, portrays an acrobat.

Bronze weapons, like ritual vessels, performed symbolic as well as functional purposes in ancient China, and Shang and Chou craftsmen perfected weapon forms and ornamentation with the same high level of artistic sensibility and technical skill lavished on other ceremonial and luxury articles. The eight early weapons in the Erickson gift significantly augment the three examples already in the Museum's collection. The three *ko* dagger-axes in the gift include our only Shang example (no. 28, illustrated, page 43) as well as two inlaid Chou blades (nos. 29, 30), one with an inscription in ornate "bird-script." In addition, there is a fourth-century B.C. spearhead (no. 31, illustrated, page 40) decorated with a pattern of intersecting double lines and diamond lozenges that was created by a process not completely understood today. The pattern is thought to have been made either by resist-etching or by the surface deposition of tin, ferric chloride, or ferric sulfate. Two Shang axes (no. 23, illustrated, page 8, and no. 24, illustrated, page 41), one inscribed, introduce variations on the fine axe from the Mayer Collection already at the Museum (1976.49), while a Shang-era dagger (no. 26, illustrated, page 42) and a Western Chou axe from the Ordos region (no. 25, illustrated, page 42) illustrate the ongoing influence of nomadic cultures on Chinese art.

Nomadic art from the Eastern Steppes is particularly well represented in the Erickson Collection. These artifacts, coming predominantly from Inner Mongolia, are often identified as Ordos, because of the concentration of finds from the Ordos Desert located inside the great bend of the Yellow River, or as Hsiung-nu, after the people who conquered this area in Western Han times, or as Sino-Siberian. The gift includes fourteen ornaments and fittings from this border area and dating from the late Chou (5th–3rd c. B.C.) or Han (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) periods. The finest is a spectacular silver plaque in the form of a horse (no. 79, illustrated, page 60). The horse's massive head and haunches, tightly flexed legs, and spearpointlike hooves create a dramatically heightened impression of the animal's physical power. The fusion of naturalistic details with an essentially abstract form to convey a sense of pent-up energy functions here in much the same way as it does in the Erickson fantastic beast and feline (no. 12, illustrated, page 17, and no. 13, illustrated,



No. 12



page 35) and demonstrates the powerful impact nomadic art had on Chou and Han artisans. The Erickson Eastern Steppes material, added to pieces already in the Museum's collection, makes it possible to illustrate the lively interaction of nomadic and Han Chinese cultures.

The most ubiquitous borrowing from nomadic culture is the belthook. This practical piece of personal adornment, typical of the portable art of the nomads, was adopted and transformed by the Chinese into a whole range of large and small buckles and fasteners exquisitely crafted in every imaginable medium. The Erickson gift adds eighteen Chou and Han belthooks to the Museum's collection, including our only examples carved from jade (no. 96) and bone (no. 124), as well as bronze fasteners ornamented with gold, silver, ivory, jade, turquoise, and other precious materials. Among the latter, the extraordinary level of Eastern Chou craftsmanship is exemplified by a bronze belthook inlaid with turquoise (no. 60, illustrated, page 55). The most outstanding feature of this belthook is its imbricated surface of small, carved turquoise chips held in place by flat, gold cloisons. Across this sea of scales meanders a gold band arabesque that may indicate the stylized body of a dragon whose head was once formed by the damaged gold hook. Six fantastic animals inlaid with minute chips of lapis lazuli, silver wire, and red lead oxide paste further ornament the sides. The degree of control and patience necessary to shape and join all of the components of this delicate creation makes it a ravishing tour de force of the jeweler's art. Other belthooks are transformed into fanciful composite beasts. A massive Eastern Chou hook of cast bronze with silver and gold inlays (no. 61, illustrated, page 54) apparently hung vertically because its body, in the form of a coiled, griffinlike creature, is seen to best advantage with the hook suspended downward. In another, a horizontal example (no. 62, illustrated, page 56), a beast with the same spindly legs, long talons, and large, leaf-shaped ears assumes an almost playful, reclining posture.

The twelve carved-bone artifacts in the Erickson gift are the first examples of this important craft to enter the collection. In addition to the Eastern Chou bone belthook mentioned above, there are nine Shang pieces, including fragments of four bone spatulas and the finials of two hairpins. Hairpins were a favorite adornment for Shang aristocratic ladies' coiffures and dozens have been found in royal burials, probably worn by wives and concubines compelled to accompany their lords into the afterlife. The Erickson examples are particularly intricate. The most complete pin shows a tapered shaft grasped in the jaws of an animal with a large leaf-shaped ear (no. 113, illustrated, page 18; detail, page 75). As in bronze decor, the finely incised coiled lines that fill the surfaces of the mask contrast with the unornamented eye and raised border of the ear. This border is further accentuated with a fringe of curved hooks created by drilling small holes along the bottom edge of each projecting flange. The interior of the ear has a hook-shaped cutout that further enhances the filigree-like quality of the carving. Only the finial remains from the second Erickson hairpin (no. 114, illustrated, page 76). This piece presents a three-dimensional crested bird, an image also found in Shang jade carvings and bronzes. In place of the incised coiled lines of the animal-head hairpin, however, the carver has created the illusion of overlapping feathers by covering the surface of the bird with rows of curved, beveled facets. The negative space of the large circular eye stands in striking contrast to this densely filled ground. Elsewhere, the carver has used drilled perforations to model the bird's form, creating a coiling tail and taloned claws from previously solid protrusions.

The exceptional quality of the above two hairpins is typical of Mr. Erickson's selectivity. His discerning eye and taste for the unusual are even more apparent in the unique miniature bone carvings of a lizard and a tiger (no. 115, illustrated, page 76, and no. 116, illustrated, page 77) included in his gift. Although small in scale, these carvings have all the personality and animation of larger jade, stone, and bronze sculptures. The tiger, perhaps an ornament or talisman, was probably suspended from a string through its curled

tail while the lizard's elongated tail with curved tip enabled it to function as an earspoon.

No stone could be more intimately associated with China than jade. Chinese have long revered jade as a symbol of purity and harmony; since Neolithic times it has been the most highly prized substance from which to create ritual objects as well as ornaments for personal adornment. It is also the most obdurate; harder than steel, in ancient times jade was "carved" through a laborious process of abrasion, wearing away surfaces using a grit of quartz or other hardstone.

The Erickson gift includes a Shang jade of major significance: a comb decorated on each side with a large, finely carved animal mask (no. 90, illustrated, page 21; detail, page 66). The identical masks are boldly rendered, using incised double lines to describe snouts, ears, eyes, eyebrows, jaws, and prominent curved fangs. A simpler version of the Erickson comb was excavated in 1976 from the tomb of the royal consort Fu Hao (13th c. B.C.).

The two Western Chou (11th c.–771 B.C.) stone carvings in the Erickson gift are also of exceptional rarity and quality. A pale green jade tablet or ornamental handle (no. 92, illustrated, page 67) is one of the largest and finest of its kind. Over ten inches in length, the two broad surfaces of the tablet are embellished with an intricate pattern of beveled lines. The principal design, resembling the stacked images of a totem pole, features a plumed bird standing atop a kneeling anthropomorphic figure that, in turn, surmounts addorsed animal masks that face up and down the vertical axis. The upward-facing mask seems to hold the foot of the kneeling figure in its jaws; another such mask frames the erect bird in its gaping mouth. Whether these animals are threatening or protecting the bird and kneeling figure remains unclear. A similar idea is depicted by a bronze vessel in the Cernushi Collection where a bearlike beast either shelters or threatens to devour a crouching human figure that huddles beneath the monster's open jaws.

The second Erickson Western Chou stone carving is a three-dimensional figure of a tiger sculpted, appropriately, from banded, black and white marble (no. 93, illustrated, page 68). The tiger, which crouches in a pose that minimizes the amount of stone to be removed, still betrays the rectangular form of the sawn block from which it was carved.

By far the most important contribution to the Museum's jade collection is the group of late Eastern Chou and Han ornaments and sword fittings in the Erickson gift. Prior to the gift, the Museum had only one example to represent the rich variety of new ornamental forms created during this high point in China's lapidary craft, when geometric and naturalistic jewelry, fittings, vessels, and sculptures were created with intricately engraved patterns and lustrously polished finishes.

A remarkable example of the delicacy and precision achieved in late Chou jades is the pendant arc with two dragon heads (no. 95, illustrated, page 69). The translucent mottled green jade has been carved into a segment of a circle with identical designs carved in relief on both sides. The ends of the arc are decorated with elaborately fashioned heads animated with incised linear features so fine they require a magnifying glass for one to appreciate fully.

This pendant arc represents a tour de force of technical control. Even more remarkable is the conceptual tour de force embodied in a second pendant in the Erickson Collection, which treats jade as if it were as flexible as hemp rope, defying the obdurate character of the stone and making it appear to be impossibly supple and pliant. The pendant (no. 94, illustrated on the cover) has a feline head attached to a body carved to resemble twisted rope. The body forms a circular coil that loops behind the head and doubles back in an elegant countercurve. At the bottom of the loop the sculptor further defies the nature of the medium by making the body appear to have tied itself in a double knot.



No. 90

While most Eastern Chou and Han jade ornaments were created as pendants or fittings, a few can actually function as small, three-dimensional sculptures. One such example is the Erickson *bi-hsieh*, or unicorn (no. 99, illustrated, page 65). This fabulous creature, which makes its appearance only with the coming of a true, sage ruler, resembles a cross between a tiger and a ram. The feline head with its gaping mouth and large fangs is embellished with a goatlike beard and a single, curved horn that rests on the animal's back. Also goatlike are its hooves and kneeling posture. The long feline tail with its curled tip makes it possible for the piece to be suspended from a cord, but it is clearly seen to best advantage when viewed as a work of sculpture, possessing a monumentality that belies its small size.

During the Warring States period (475–221 B.C.) and ensuing Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) weaponry was often embellished with elegant jade fittings. Six Erickson jades once ornamented swords and sword scabbards. Two exquisite scabbard slides, pieces that functioned to attach the scabbard to a belt, reveal the same delight in contorted and pliant form seen in the above pendant (no. 94). The smaller slide (no. 102) shows a feline creature with a long, twisted tail clinging with taloned claws to the forward edge of the slide. Its long, twisted tail with a plumed flourish drapes across the surface of the slide while the animal's elongated trunk curves around the back and reemerges through the top so that the creature forms a loop, its neck touching the haunch of its hind leg. The larger slide (no. 104, illustrated, page 72) is unornamented except for three fabulous beasts sculpted in high relief. Like the creature on the smaller slide, these animals all have feline heads, taloned feet, and long, twisted tails with curled tips. The largest of the three even has the same kind of bifurcated tail with a prominent plumed flourish. The three form a playful family grouping with the largest beast in the middle confronting the smallest face-to-face while attempting to wrap its tail around the torso of the middle-sized animal.

Sometime during the Chou dynasty, Chinese craftsmen began working in glass, creating multicolored glass-paste beads as well as carved glass substitutes for jade. The Erickson gift provides the Museum with its first two Eastern Chou inlaid beads (nos. 110, 111) as well as a unique miniature glass sculpture of a horse from the ensuing Han period (no. 112, illustrated, page 74). A spectrographic analysis of the horse reveals that it contains almost no barium—a common component of early Chinese glass—but shows the presence of a significant amount of potassium, an element that is also present in other early Chinese excavated pieces. A further confirmation of its early date is the horse's powerful, arched neck and its massive head and hindquarters. These proportions are consistent with other Han images of the fabled heavenly horses of Ferghana. The technique of drilling a hole to differentiate the neck from the head is also typical of jade work of this period.

Among the substances worked by early Chinese artisans, one of the rarest to survive today is amber. A set of three carved ambers in the Erickson gift is unique (nos. 107–109, illustrated, page 73). The set consists of a matching pair of phoenixes and a square plaque carved with a fabulous single-horned feline. Each phoenix is compressed into an elongated vertical pose with a backward-bent head, short, clipped wings set at right angles to one another, and a long, plumed tail. The beaks and feet of both birds have been broken off, suggesting that the pieces were once fastened to a comb or hairpin. The rectangular plaque has been drilled like a button in the back. Adornments for a lady's coiffure or garment, these delicate carvings probably date to the Sung dynasty (960–1279).

During the seventh and eighth centuries, the T'ang empire reached its apex of power and wealth; its capital, Ch'ang-an, the eastern terminus of the Silk Road, was the most brilliant and cosmopolitan city on earth. Traders, artisans, and missionaries from India, Indonesia, Tibet, Central Asia, the Near East, and Japan enlivened the city's markets,

established their own temples, and presented tribute at the imperial court. Vessels and utensils made from silver and gold attest to the prosperity of the age, while their shapes and decorative motifs, often influenced by Indian and Mediterranean forms, show a distinctly international flavor. Western influence became especially pronounced after the mid-seventh century, when members of the Sassanian royal court fled to Central Asia and China to escape Mohammedan invaders.

The Erickson gift includes three exquisite examples of T'ang silverwork: a hexagonal covered box, an octagonal cup with a ring handle, and a mirror back. The box, in the shape of a six-petaled lotus blossom, is decorated with an airy design of tendrils, pomegranate flowers, and ducks set against a finely punched ringmat ground (no. 17, illustrated, pages 27 and 37 left). The narrow sides of the lid and base are decorated with simple landscape scenes: flowering plants and butterflies encircle the lip of the base while around the edge of the lid the twelve animals of the zodiac prance among ornamental garden rocks and flowers. The octagonal shape of the silver cup presents an elegant variation on the usual circular cross section of this vessel type (no. 18, illustrated, page 37 right). Geometry also asserts itself in the cup's decoration: lotus scrolls in the form of palmettes are linked to create octagonal rosettes. The mirror back, a thin sheet of silver with repoussé designs of animals, birds, and floral scrolls in high relief, was originally inlaid in the backside of a bronze mirror (no. 22, illustrated, page 38). These three objects, added to the seven pieces of silver acquired from the Mayer Collection in 1974 and together with other Museum holdings, make a display that vividly conveys the richness of T'ang metalwork.

No encyclopedic assemblage of Chinese objects would be complete without ceramics. Although Mr. Erickson did not make this an area of special concentration, his gift includes half a dozen pieces of great distinction, ranging in time from the second century B.C. to the fourteenth century A.D.

A Han dynasty incense burner is notable for its striking form (no. 125, illustrated, page 82). Made of low-fired pottery, the hemispherical bowl of the censer is supported by three crouching bears with gaping jaws; the conical lid is sculpted to resemble a fantastic mountain landscape inhabited by wild animals. Incense, rising through perforations in the lid, would appear like misty vapors emanating from clefts in the rock, reflecting the Han view that clouds were visible exhalations of *ch'i*, or cosmic ether, which originated inside the earth. Mimicking the form of Han bronze censers, the Erickson piece was created as an exquisite but inexpensive substitute for use in burial.

The interval between the Han and T'ang dynasties, an era of small principalities and rapidly changing ruling houses, is one of the weakest areas in the Museum's collection. A rare, green-glazed bottle of sixth-century date in the Erickson gift is, therefore, a particularly important addition (no. 126, illustrated, page 6). The bottle, which probably comes from northern China, has a buff, stoneware body with a finely crackled olive-green glaze that covers all but the base and footrim. Modeled after a bronze form that originated in the Buddhist art of India (see nos. 15, 16), the body is decorated with incised lines as well as stamped patterns.

The powerful head of a lion, although only a fragment, is an arresting example of ceramic sculpture (no. 127, illustrated, page 81). The head was modeled in high relief from a single piece of clay to which the ears, mane, tongue, and teeth were applied while still moist. Formerly dated to the T'ang dynasty, the hard, white body and slightly khaki-colored glaze of the lion's head identify it as a rare example of Ting-ware ceramic sculpture of the Northern Sung dynasty (960–1127).

The large group of white porcelains produced in the region of Hopeh Province and known as Ting ware epitomizes the Northern Sung preference for understatement. The elegantly simple forms of this ware are ornamented with incised, carved, or stamped





No. 133 (detail)

designs that catch the glaze so that the decoration appears like a faint watermark against the more thinly glazed smooth surfaces. In addition to the lion's head, the Erickson gift includes a classic example of Ting ware, a large dish decorated with a dragon chasing a flaming pearl through the sky (no. 129). The exterior and sides of the deep dish are unornamented, and the coiled dragon, drawn in fluid, incised lines, is confined to a rondel at the center of the interior.

In contrast to the delicate understatement of the Ting-ware dish, the large Tz'u-chou-ware pillow in the Erickson gift represents the contemporary tradition of robust, painted ceramics also produced in Hopeh Province in the region around the city of Tz'u-chou (no. 130, illustrated, page 84). Decorated with an underglaze black iron pigment, the pillow top has been treated like a Sung fan painting, its *ju-i* fungus shape enclosing a depiction of two ducks on a pond pursued by a hawk. A three-character mark, *Chang chia tsao*, "made by the Chang Family," stamped into the base also appears on shards excavated from the Han-tan area of Hopeh, making it possible to date the Erickson pillow to the thirteenth century.

It is quite remarkable for a collector of Chinese "objects" to collect paintings, too. In addition to his excavated materials, however, Mr. Erickson assembled a distinguished group of Chinese paintings, three of which, dating from the Yüan (1279–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and Ch'ing (1644–1912) dynasties, are included in his gift.

The earliest, and most important, is a monumental landscape hanging scroll by the Yüan artist T'ang Ti (about 1296–1364) (no. 133, illustrated, page 87; detail, page 24). A fellow townsman and follower of the great scholar-painter Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322), who sought to define a new, scholar-amateur style through the return to ancient models, T'ang Ti "illustrates" a poem by the most esteemed ancestor of the scholar-artist ethic, the poet-painter Wang Wei (699–759). Using the conservative brush idiom of the Northern Sung masters Li Ch'eng (about 919–67) and Kuo Hsi (active about 1050–90), T'ang builds forms with the principal motifs of the earlier style, "crab-claw" branches and "billowing-cloud" rocks. Following Chao Meng-fu's example of employing calligraphic techniques in painting, however, T'ang has made each brushstroke individually assertive. The Erickson painting, executed in 1323 and representing T'ang's earliest extant dated work, together with the Museum's *Returning Fisherman* of 1342 and John M. Crawford, Jr.'s promised gift of *The Pavilion of Prince T'eng* of 1352 give the Metropolitan the greatest concentration of T'ang Ti's work outside of China, making it possible to survey his entire career as well as to illustrate both his monumental decorative style and his more intimate ink drawing on paper.

During the seventeenth century, a number of painters found inspiration in the Northern Sung monumental landscape tradition, in part as a reaction against the Yüan scholar-artist style championed by Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636). Two paintings in the Erickson gift illustrate these competing styles with important works by two of their earliest practitioners.

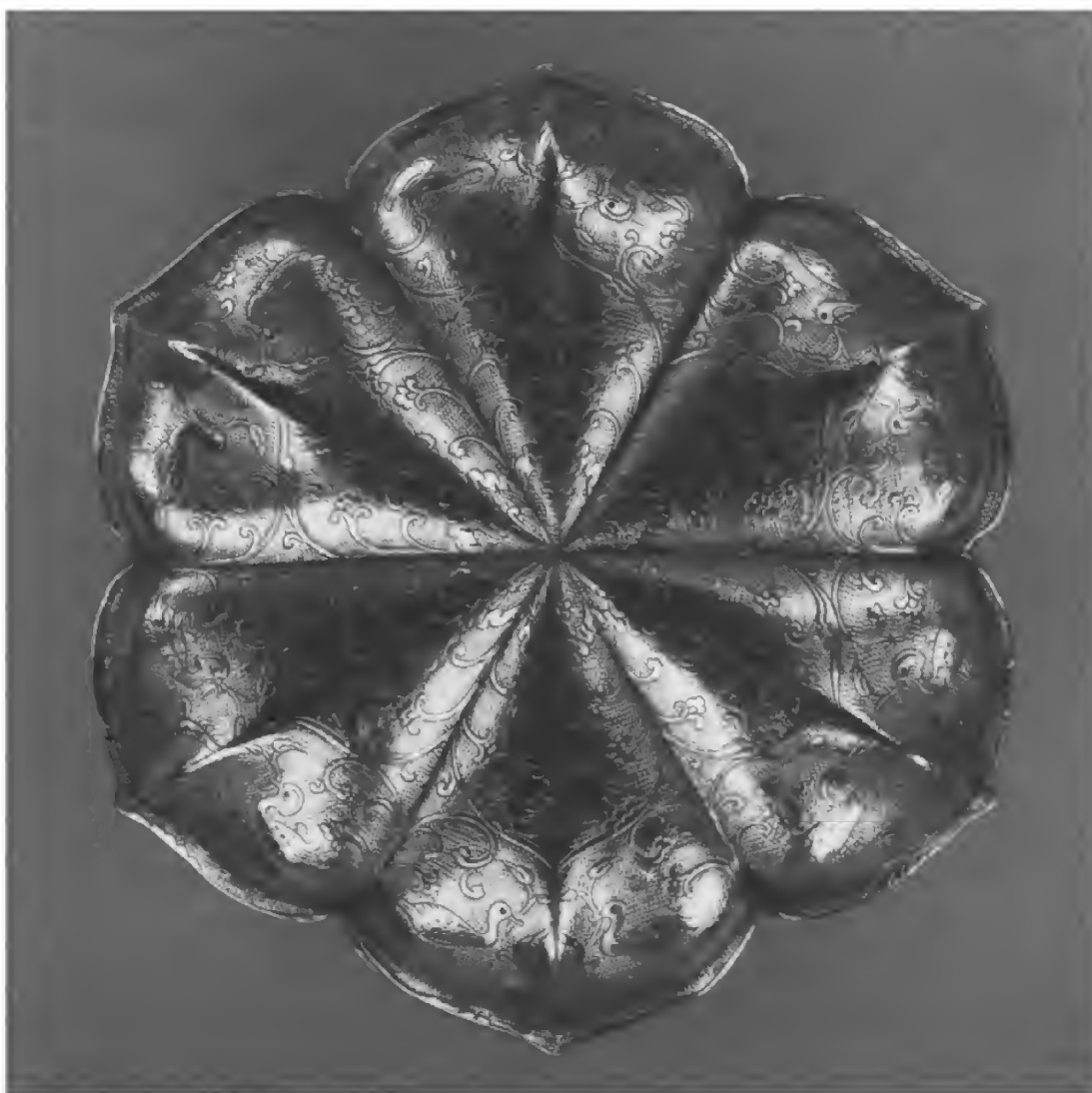
*Landscape in the Manner of Huang Kung-wang* by the Sung-chiang artist Mo Shih-lung (ca. 1539–87) exemplifies the late Ming revival of the Yüan scholar-artist tradition (no. 134, illustrated, page 88). Painted in 1581, it shows the painter struggling to achieve a strong sense of three-dimensional form in his painting. Piling up hummock and plateau motifs of the Yüan master Huang Kung-wang (1269–1354) into a few interlocking units, Mo builds a mountain ridgeline that stands solidly within the picture frame. An inscription by the connoisseur Ch'en Chi-ju (1558–1639) on the painting makes clear how deeply Mo's vision impressed his contemporaries: "Mo Shih-lung's calligraphy and painting brought about a revival [of those arts] in our district. Even Tung Ch'i-ch'ang was one of those who followed him." Mo Shih-lung's career was cut short by his early

death, and it was his brilliant friend, Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, whose paintings and critical writings ultimately defined a new orthodox canon in scholar-amateur painting, but the Erickson scroll attests to Mo Shih-lung's contribution to Tung's revolutionary new style.

Wang To (1592–1652), believing that the creation of extraordinary landscape scenery was the primary goal of painting, returned to the monumental landscape motifs of the Northern Sung to emphasize his dissatisfaction with Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's credo that, in considering the wonders of brush and ink, landscape cannot compete with painting. Wang's *Mountain Landscape* of 1651, painted one year before his death, is an eloquent statement of his fondness for pictorial content (no. 135, illustrated, page 90; detail, page 85). Heavily contoured trees, many with leafless, stubby branches, schematic dotting on the summits of the mountain peaks, and starkly outlined rock formations all recall the tenth-century master Fan K'uan. The prominence of figures, buildings, and pathways in the picture—in striking contrast to the generally uninhabited landscapes of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang—emphasizes the Sung ideal that paintings should be places to wander and dwell in.

The contrast between paintings by Mo Shih-lung and Wang To, between a subtle Ting-ware dish and a bold Tz'u-chou painted pillow, or between a dynamic nomadic buckle and a refined jade pendant illustrates Ernest Erickson's lifelong fascination with the contrasting objectives and varied currents that exist within any vital culture. Combining this catholic taste with an exceptional eye for quality, Mr. Erickson created a collection of remarkable depth and breadth. The Erickson gift of Chinese art to the Metropolitan, encompassing over three thousand years of Chinese culture, not only significantly strengthens the Museum's ability to present an encyclopedic survey of ancient Chinese arts, but may also serve as a fitting memorial to Mr. Erickson's generosity of spirit and taste.

# METALWORK





No. 2

# VESSELS AND UTENSILS

## 1. RITUAL WINE VESSEL WITH SPOUT (HO)

Shang dynasty, ca. 14th c. B.C.  
Bronze, height 8½ in. (21.6 cm.)

The form of this spouted vessel, its pear-shaped body, domed lid, and conical foot, relates it to an early *yu* wine bucket from P'an-lung-ch'eng, Hupeh (see *Wen wu* 1976/2, pl. 3:2; Fong, no. 9). Two lugs protrude from the shoulder on either side of the spout, presumably for attaching a rope handle, a feature that further links this vessel's form to that of the *yu*.

The decor of broad bands defined by deeply cast grooves with the principal motifs in rounded relief is characteristic of Max Loehr's Style III (see Loehr, 1968, p. 13), which is found on middle Shang vessels of the Cheng-chou phase (about 14th c. B.C.). The foot is ornamented with a single raised line punctuated by four circular holes. The body is divided into two bands of design. The main frieze features bovine animal masks (*t'ao-t'ieh*). Right below the spout are two serpents. The spout is formed from their conjoined heads and gaping jaws, while their coiled, scorpionlike tails curve downward to frame the bovine mask. The second decor band is a narrow frieze filled with stylized bird heads. Three "bow string" relief lines encircle the neck of the vessel. The domed lid is decorated with back-to-back bovine masks in high relief in a somewhat more advanced style than that of the body decoration. A domed knob is attached to the lid with solder.

Radiographs of the vessel reveal a number of radial saw cuts, repaired with solder, in both the lid and the mouth, suggesting that the lid has been made smaller and the mouth larger so that the two pieces fit. A spectrographic analysis of the piece, which shows significant differences in the elemental composition of the body, lid, and knob, also indicates that the three elements originally belonged to different vessels.

In addition to the *yu* from P'an-lung-ch'eng, the closest comparisons to this vessel type are the middle Shang *ho* wine pouring vessel excavated at P'ing-ku hsien, Hopeh (see Tsou, pl. 40:4) and the 13th-century *ho* excavated in 1976 from the tomb of the Shang royal consort Fu Hao at An-yang, Honan (see *Yin hsü Fu Hao mu*, pl. 40:1).

Published: Karlgren, 1962, p. 28 and pl. 59a.

1985.214.1

(Illustrated, page 14)

## 2. RITUAL COVERED WINE VESSEL (FANG-I)

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.  
Bronze, 10½ x 6½ in. (25.6 x 16 cm.)

Inscribed on the interior bottom of the body with a single ideograph showing two figures holding a tall spear with an attached pennant while a third figure stands to one side. (Illustrated, below)

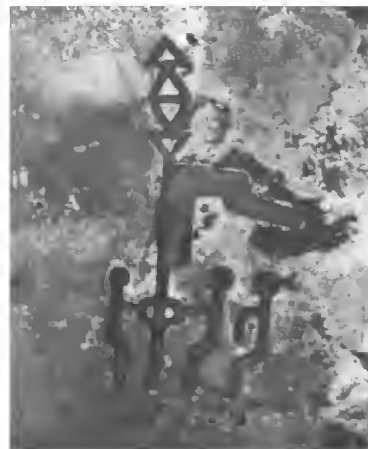
The vessel is cast in the form of a rectangular box with slightly spreading sides and a tectiform lid surmounted by a knob that echoes the shape of the lid. Densely scored flanges accentuate the corners and central axes of both the body and the lid. At the base of each side are small, open arches, half the height of the foot. In these features this vessel closely resembles the superb *fang-i* formerly in the Mayer Collection, now also at the Metropolitan (1974.268.2; see Loehr, 1968, p. 90). The decor of the body is divided into three registers with identical motifs on each face: the top register consists of a pair of opposed birds, the main frieze contains a frontal bovine mask, while the foot register is filled with two stylized dragons. Each of these motifs stands out in high relief on the densely spiraled surface corresponding to Loehr Style V.

The pictogram from this vessel is recorded in Barnard and Cheung, vol. 7, p. 790, fig. 1315, together with another example on a *kuang* (p. 791, fig. 1317). The same glyph in reversed form appears on a *p'an* (p. 790, fig. 1316) and on a *chia* (see *Fine Chinese Bronzes*, no. 49).

Published: Karlgren, 1962, p. 20 and pl. 17b.

1985.214.2

(Illustrated, page 28)



No. 2 (detail)

### 3. RITUAL WINE BEAKER (KU)

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze, height 12¼ in. (31.1 cm.)

The beaker, which is circular in cross section, is built up of three sections: a hollow, splayed foot with a high base; a slender, slightly bulging waist; and a flaring mouth. The decoration accords with the clear articulation of the vessel's form. A wide band on the foot shows, in profile, animal masks of confronting dragons. The waist shows another variation of the animal-mask motif, with each side of the mask made up of vertical dragons. The neck is encircled by a narrow band filled with serpents. The tall, flaring mouth is accentuated by four tapering blades filled with barbed lancets. All this ornamentation is executed in flat relief against a ground of rectangular spirals. The foot and waist decoration is divided by bold, finely serrated flanges.

A *ku* of similar proportions and decoration was excavated in 1976 from the tomb of the Shang royal consort Fu Hao at An-yang, Honan (see *K'ao ku* 1983/8, p. 720, fig. 4).

1985.214.4

### 4. RITUAL WINE EWER WITH COVER (KUANG)

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze with turquoise inlay, 6⅝ x 7⅝ in. (16 x 18.5 cm.)

Standing on a hollow oval foot, this sauceboat-shaped vessel has a bulging waist and a flaring mouth that curves upward at one end into a spout. The body is unornamented except for the handle, which is surmounted by a feline head with eyes, ears, and snout inlaid with turquoise chips. Extending below the handle is a serpentlike creature with snail horns, a curved tail, and clawed arms that cling to the vessel body at the point where the handle joins the vessel wall. The back of the creature is inlaid with turquoise in a diamond lozenge pattern. A larger version of this creature dominates the lid. The head of the monster surmounts the spout so that its mouth, lined with pointed teeth, functions as an outlet or vent for the contents. The prominent eyes with bulging irises, the bold snail horns, and the ears are further accentuated by turquoise inlay. The monster's serpentine body, cast in high relief and completely covered with a triangular and diamond pattern of turquoise inlay, ends in a spiral curve. Small clawed arms protrude from the body just behind the horns. Two profile dragons—one long and slender, the other larger and curved—occupy the unequal spaces flanking the creature's body. Both possess snail horns and serpentine bodies similar to those of the principal motif.

An interesting comparison with the Erickson piece is the *kuang* in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, which is ornamented in the more conventional fashion of cast low relief but which has a cover with the same type of serpentine monster with a three-dimensional head (see Karlgren, 1952, no. 31).

1985.214.5

(Illustrated)



No. 4



No. 5

## 5. LADLE

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze, length 12½ in. (31.7 cm.)

The deep, barrel-shaped bowl of this ladle is incised with a wide band of vertical striations, while the recessed lip and footrim of the bowl are plain. Attached to the base of the bowl is a long, gently S-curved handle. The handle's U-shaped cross section, with a broad, convex top and short, straight sides, gives this delicate stem an appearance of substantiality. The handle's flattened, fan-shaped end is decorated with a low-relief pattern of paired animals shown in profile. Seven pairs, including elephants, water buffalo, stags, and rabbits, confront one another along the central axis; three more pairs, plus a lone fish, face backward along the sides. Below this area is a large, composite animal cast in high relief. The body of the beast is composed of three curled serpents, the smallest of which forms the nose bridge of the face. Snail horns and round, protruding eyes complete the mask; its jaws have been obscured by a second, much bolder, mask. Radiography shows that this bolder mask is

actually an ancient repair. The original stem, which is only one millimeter thick in this area, was broken in Shang times, and a thick band of metal was cast around the handle to mend the break and strengthen the ladle at its most vulnerable point. This new animal mask, with recumbent C-scroll ears, bulging eyes, and a pointed snout that appears to grasp the handle in its jaws, was created where the break occurred. Five other breaks in the stem have been repaired in recent times. A second animal mask with bottle-shaped horns and with either a salamander or a lizard perched on its forehead gazes up the shaft of the handle from the base of the cup. Below its snout are two simpler masks cast in low relief. The remainder of the handle is decorated with parallel vertical striations.

A similarly shaped ladle was excavated at the last Shang capital site near An-yang (see *Honan ch'u t'u Shang Chou ch'ing t'ung ch'i*, pl. 246).

1985.214.34

(Illustrated)





No. 6

# 6. RITUAL COOKING VESSEL (*LI-TING*)

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze,  $8\frac{3}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{16}$  in. (21.3 x 18 cm.)

Inscribed with a single character cast on the inside of the left handle.

The vessel has a round body with a tri-lobed bottom supported by three solid, cylindrical legs. Two inverted U-shaped handles project vertically from the rim. The interstices of the design are filled with a black compound. The three lobes are decorated with animal masks flanked by standing birds. Low flanges

bisect each animal mask. A narrow border of cicadas encircles the rim.

A *li-ting* from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, with a similar decor of animal masks surmounted by a narrow frieze of cicadas, has been published in Loehr, 1968, no. 26.

Published: Kleijkamp, no. 20, pl. 6; Karlgren, 1959, p. 302 and pl. 22b.

1985.214.3

(Illustrated)

## 7. RITUAL COOKING VESSEL (FANG-TING)

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze, height 8½ in. (21.6 cm.)

Inscribed on the interior bottom of the vessel with a single large glyph showing a hand beside the ideograph for “ram.”

This rectangular cauldron is supported by four sturdy cylindrical legs. Bold, serrated flanges accentuate the corners of the vessel while massive, inverted U-shaped handles project outward at a slight angle from the overhanging rim. Each face is decorated in a similar manner: a U-shaped area filled with rows of bosses encloses a panel diapered with a pattern of interlocking angular scrolls; surmounting this is a narrow band with confronting dragons. High-relief animal masks bifurcated by flanges ornament the top of each leg; the outer surface of each handle is ornamented with a pair of animal heads in low relief.

A similar *fang-ting* excavated in 1950 at An-yang, Honan, is published in Watson, 1973, no. 86. A nearly identical example, formerly in the collection of C.T. Loo, is published with a reference to the Erickson piece in Karlgren, 1960, p. 6 and pl. 8a.

1985.214.8

(Illustrated)



No. 7

## 8. RITUAL WINE BUCKET WITH COVER (FU-I YU)

Shang dynasty, 11th c. B.C.

Bronze, height (to top of lid) 11⅞ in. (29 cm.)

Identical seven-character inscriptions cast into the interior of the body and lid begin with three unidentified glyphs followed by the phrase: “made this vessel for Father I” (. . . tso Fu-I i).

This imposing wine container epitomizes the classic Shang solution to this vessel type. The *yu* is monumental and architectonic in elevation: its wide, splayed foot supports an expansive body that swells outward in a convex arc that continues to the cornicelike lip of the domed lid. A bail handle, attached by rings along the long axis of the vessel, emphasizes the broad proportions of the *yu*; the cover is crowned by a bulbous knob.

The decor, which stands out in plain high relief from an unornamented ground, reinforces the architectonic divisions of the vessel. Emphasizing the vessel's stately monumentality, the facade is dominated by a large frontal animal mask on the belly; the silhouette is intensified by spiky flanges that divide the body into quadrants. Pairs of dragons facing inward fill each quadrant of the foot ring and the narrow friezes encircling the shoulder of the vessel and collar of the lid. A rectangular mask in high relief takes the place of the bisecting flange on the shoulder. Two animal masks oriented along the long axis of the vessel ornament the dome of the lid. The melonlike knob is divided into six segments, each of which contains the inverted head of a rabbit with narrow face and long ears. The handle is decorated on its outer surface with four pairs of back-to-back dragons while the ring ends of the handle are partially concealed by animal heads with protruding, bottle-shaped snail horns.

Two similar *yu* have been published in Chinese journals: one was purchased in 1964 by the Hopeh Cultural Relics Bureau (see *Wen wu* 1965/5, pl. 4:2); the other was discovered in a hoard of 103 bronzes buried close to the end of the Western Chou period (ca. 770 B.C.) at Chuang-po, Fu-feng hsien, Shensi (see *Wen wu* 1978/3, pl. 2:2). Both are dated stylistically to the late Shang period.

Published: Liu Hsin-yüan, *chüan* 6, p. 9.

1985.214.7

(Illustrated, page 2)

9. RITUAL WINE VESSEL (TSUN)

Western Chou dynasty, 11th–10th c. B.C.

Bronze, height  $9\frac{7}{8}$  in. (24.4 cm.)

This beaker-shaped vessel is built up of a hollow, splayed foot, slightly swollen waist, and a tall, flaring mouth. The decoration, which is limited to the middle section of the body, consists of a frieze of animal masks flanked by stylized vertical dragons. The entire design, including the double-thread lines that border it, stands out in plain relief against a blank ground.

A *tsun* of similar silhouette and decoration was excavated in 1967 from a Western Chou tomb at Pait's'ao-p'o, Ling-t'ai hsien, Kansu (see *Wen wu* 1972/12, p. 7, fig. 4). An almost identical *tsun* is published in Karlgren, 1960, pl. 9a.

1985.214.6

10. RITUAL POURING VESSEL (I)

Eastern Chou dynasty, 7th–6th c. B.C.

Bronze,  $5\frac{7}{8} \times 10\frac{3}{8}$  in. (15 x 26.3 cm.)

This ewer is shaped like a sauceboat with a large spout, loop handle, and four serpentine claw feet. The body of the ewer is decorated with a broad frieze filled with a diaper pattern of diamond lozenges and bosses bordered by narrow bands of scrolling. This geometric decor contrasts strikingly with the vessel's zoomorphic handle and legs. Particularly elaborate is the handle: a four-legged creature, with horns and an openwork dorsal crest, peers over the edge of the bowl as it bites the rim.

1985.214.9

(Illustrated)



No. 10

11. RITUAL FOOD VESSEL (TOU)

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze,  $7\frac{1}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{8}$  in. (18.1 x 23.2 cm.)

This vessel is made up of two pedestaled serving dishes. The shallower one, when inverted, forms a lid, with its low foot functioning as a knob. The deep-bowled dish stands on a taller foot, with two ring handles projecting from its sides just below the lip. Except for a cowrie-shell pattern along the edges of these rings, the vessel's ornamentation consists entirely of the openwork interlacery of the foot and knob. The openwork on both consists of twenty-four intertwined serpents, differentiated by the chevron or dot patterns on their backs.

The mate to the Erickson *tou*, purchased by the Metropolitan Museum in 1916 (16.89), is published in Umehara, 1936, pl. 36:2.

1985.214.12



No. 13

12. ORNAMENT IN THE FORM OF A FANTASTIC WINGED FELINE

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze,  $7\frac{1}{16} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$  in. (18 x 18.4 cm.)

This fabulous winged feline presents a delicate balance of abstract form and carefully observed naturalistic detail. It has the face, paws, tail, and sinewy body of a tiger, but its surface is covered with fine intaglio ornamentation that combines abstract arabesques with fin and feather motifs; the head is topped by a fantastic geometric horn. The creature's crouching stance and raised head emphasize the serpentine S-curve of the body. The total absence of decoration on the backside of the figure and the presence of rectangular holes in the haunch and shoulder of that side show that the piece was originally made as an applied ornament for a vessel or other large-scale object.

Except for its more modest S-curved tail, the piece is identical to the pair of winged felines in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (see Karlgren, 1952, nos. 94, 95). The tail appears ancient, but was soldered on in recent times. The head and the fin projecting from the feline's left jaw have been reattached; and the top of the horn, the left front paw, and the left rear paw are modern replacements.

Published: Bunker, no. 10, fig. 2; Katz, no. 15.

1985.214.11

(Illustrated, page 17)

13. ORNAMENT IN THE FORM OF A RECLINING TIGER

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze,  $4\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  in. (10.5 x 16.5 cm.)

The agility and strength of this noble feline are powerfully suggested through the elegantly curved back and legs and the prominence of the animal's massive paws and broad jaw. The body is further enhanced by incised double-line S-curves and lozenges as well as scales on the tail and forehead.

The Erickson piece is one of three tigers that, according to Orvar Karlbeck, were discovered at Chin-ts'un, Lo-yang, and that probably once "embellished the cover to a [ting] tripod." One tiger, presently in the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm, is illustrated and discussed in Palmgren, pl. 34; Karlgren, 1948, pl. 35; and Watson, 1962, pl. 89A. The second tiger, which was sold in 1984 at Sotheby's in London (see *Important Ancient Chinese Bronzes*), is illustrated in Lion-Goldschmidt and Moreau-Gorbard, pl. 43.

Published: Katz, no. 16.

1985.214.10

(Illustrated)

#### 14. VESSEL (CHIAO TOU)

T'ang dynasty (618–906)

Bronze, 6 x 8½ in. (15.3 x 21.6 cm.)

The most prominent feature of this tripod vessel is its duck-head handle, which resembles the gracefully bent neck of a bird. Standing on elegant, cabriole legs, the shallow basin also boasts a porringerlike projecting rim opposite the handle as well as a narrow, elongated spout on one side. This type of tripod vessel with a bird- or dragon-head handle dates back to late Han times when it functioned as a cooking vessel. By T'ang times, the diminished size of the bowl must have limited its use to the heating of wine or other liquids. A similar piece was recently excavated from a tomb dated to the year 848 (see *K'ao ku* 1985/2, p. 136, fig. 8).

1985.214.13

#### 15. COVERED BOTTLE VASE

T'ang dynasty (618–906)

Bronze, 9¾ x 4¾ in. (23.8 x 11.7 cm.)

Vessels of this shape are often seen in Chinese Buddhist sculptures or paintings, where they represent the *pao p'ing* "precious bottle" (*amrtakalasa* in Sanskrit) for nectar carried by Bodhisattvas or the water vases carried by monks. Derived from Indian prototypes, the shape appears in a variety of media in China, including ceramic and silver as well as bronze. This vessel is notable for its apple-shaped body, its high, flaring foot, and its long, narrow neck that tapers slightly before flaring into a graceful, trumpet mouth. The vessel exterior is unornamented, although the interior of the flared mouth is simply decorated with two pairs of incised lines. The slightly convex lid fits over the lip of the vessel. It is further held in place by a long, tweezerlike device with two flaring prongs that extend into the body the full length of the attenuated neck.

Ceramic and metal bottles of this general shape range in date from the Northern Ch'i (550–77) to the Northern Sung (960–1127) period (see *Wen wu* 1972/1, p. 57, fig. 33; *K'ao ku t'ung hsün* 1957/3, pl. 8:1; *Wen wu* 1981/4, p. 46, figs. 6–8 and 1972/8, p. 42, fig. 5; *Wen wu ts'an k'ao tzu liao* 1958/10, p. 35, fig. 8). For a discussion of the shape, see Gyllensvärd, pp. 74–75.

1985.214.14

#### 16. MINIATURE VASE

T'ang dynasty (618–906)

Bronze, 5⅝ x 2⅞ in. (13.5 x 7.3 cm.)

In addition to its smaller size, this vase is squatter in shape than the previous vase, having a less attenuated neck, a flatter, broader shoulder, and a more compact foot. Except for a raised line encircling the base of the neck, the exterior of the vessel is unornamented; the interior of the flared mouth is incised with double lines. A similar pair of incised double lines ornaments the underside of the vessel foot.

1985.214.15

#### 17. HEXAFOIL COVERED BOX

T'ang dynasty, 7th–8th c.

Silver, 3⅝ x 1¼ in. (8 x 3.2 cm.)

The graceful shape of this box is an innovation of T'ang silversmiths. Both the bottom and the top halves of the box have been hammered from single sheets of silver into the shape of inverted, six-petaled lotus blossoms. Top and bottom are decorated with nearly identical designs of tendrils and pomegranate blossoms against a finely punched ringmat ground. Six pairs of ducks further ornament the cover. The narrow sides of the cover and base are decorated with simple landscape scenes: flowering plants and butterflies encircle the lip of the base while around the edge of the lid the twelve animals of the zodiac prance among ornamental garden rocks and flowers.

Two similar hexafoil boxes are in the collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City (see Kelly, no. 42) and of the Hon. Hugh Scott (see Singer, no. 45).

Published: Gyllensvärd, p. 86 and pl. 8c.

1985.214.16

(Illustrated, pages 27, 37 left)



Nos. 17 (left), 18 (right)

# 18. OCTAGONAL CUP WITH RING HANDLE

T'ang dynasty, 7th–8th c.

Silver with gilt,  $2\frac{7}{16} \times 3\frac{7}{16}$  in. (6.2 x 8.8 cm.)

The octagonal shape of this silver cup presents an elegant variation on the usual circular cross section. The eight concave walls and flaring mouth of the vessel rise from a bowl-shaped base that stands on a conical footring made up of sixteen facets. The cup's ring handle is not attached directly to the body of the vessel, but is suspended from a triangular thumb piece that projects at a slight angle from one facet of the lip. The apparently seamless cup is actually soldered together from numerous carefully hammered silver sheets: the individual segments of the footring and body, the hemispherical base, the thumb piece, and the ring handle.

The exterior surfaces of the cup, including the area inside the foot, are decorated with engraved designs superimposed on a ringmat ground. The octagonal motif reappears in the decoration: lotus scrolls in the

form of palmettes are linked to create octagonal rosettes. The rosettes and lotus scrolls are all highlighted with a thin layer of gilt.

This type of octagonal cup with a ring handle and thumb piece has direct parallels in Sassanian silverwork (see Gyllensvärd, p. 63 and fig. 24). A similar T'ang example was among the hoard of over 270 gold and silver vessels discovered in 1970 in the Hsing-hua section of Sian where Li Shou-li, the Prince of Pin, had his residence. The hoard probably was part of the prince's household belongings buried for safekeeping at the time of the An Lu-shan rebellion of 755 (see *Wen wu* 1972/1, p. 40, fig. 27; *Wen hua ta ko ming ch'i chien ch'u t'u wen wu*, p. 52; Watson, 1973, no. 306). An even closer parallel is the T'ang cup excavated in 1983 from Han-sen-chai, Sian, Shensi (see *Kōga bunmei-ten zuroku*, no. 125).

Published: Gyllensvärd, p. 64 and pl. 6e.

1985.214.17

(Illustrated, right)



No. 22

# MIRRORS

## 19. MIRROR

Eastern Chou dynasty, 4th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze, diameter  $6\frac{9}{16}$  in. (16.6 cm.)

The back of this thin, flat mirror is ornamented with designs cast in shallow relief. A thin, ribbed suspension loop at the center of the back is enclosed within a smooth, slightly concave band, while a wider concave band encircles the rim. Between the two bands is an ornamented field featuring four felines drawn in thread relief.

This type of mirror has been excavated from tombs of the feudal state of Ch'u located in present-day Hunan, Hupeh, and Anhui provinces. Similar examples have been published in Karlgren, 1941, pl. 21:C62,C64 and 1968, pl. 27:C66; *K'ao ku t'ung hsiün* 1957/1, pl. 21:4; Watson, 1962, pl. 91c.

Published: Kleijkamp, no. 73, pl. 6.

1985.214.19

(Illustrated, page 12)

## 20. MIRROR

Eastern Chou dynasty, 4th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze, diameter  $9\frac{5}{16}$  in. (23.6 cm.)

As in the piece above, two concave bands frame the central design of this large mirror, in this case a slightly concave, star-shaped design made up of eight connected arcs superimposed upon a ground of thread-relief spirals and triangles. The suspension loop of the mirror has been sculpted to resemble a coiled animal. The mirror has been shattered and pieced back together from seven or more pieces.

Similar examples of this "Huai" style of mirrors associated with the state of Ch'u have been published in Karlgren, 1941, pl. 66:G9, and 1968, pl. 88:G9; *K'ao ku t'ung hsiün* 1957/1, pl. 20:5.

1985.214.20

## 21. MIRROR

T'ang dynasty (618–906)

Bronze, diameter  $8\frac{1}{8}$  in. (20.7 cm.)

This massive silver-bronze mirror is distinguished by its austere design. The only ornamentation consists of a domed knob surrounded by a molded band and a prominent, everted rim. The profile and proportions are almost identical to the more typical T'ang mirrors decorated with grapevines and lions.

1985.214.21

## 22. MIRROR BACK

T'ang dynasty, 8th c.

Silver, diameter  $9\frac{11}{16}$  in. (24.6 cm.)

This mirror back, a thin sheet of silver with repoussé designs of animals, birds, and floral scrolls in high relief against a ringmat ground, was originally inlaid into the backside of a bronze mirror. The decoration has been divided into three registers. The outermost register is the narrowest and consists of a continuous scrolling vine. This register is separated from the middle register by a ridge decorated with a bordered sawtooth pattern. The middle register, which is nearly twice the width of the outer register, is filled with a counterclockwise procession of twelve mythical beasts: three pairs of *feng-huang*, or phoenixes, interspersed with three pairs of fanciful felines. The birds, which are shown in various poses of strutting or running, are differentiated, male and female, by the presence or absence of topknots. Each pair of felines likewise consists of one animal with a full tail preceded by one with a tufted tail. Lotus blossoms and curling lines fill the interstices. A convex ridge separates this register from the large, inner register. This inner ring of decoration contains six more felines, again differentiated by full or tufted tails and by the presence or absence of curled manes. The animals move in a counterclockwise direction, clinging or stepping gingerly on the curling tendrils of a pomegranate that emanates from the center of the mirror in six branches, each of which culminates in a single fruit. A twelve-petaled lotus blossom encircles the central domed suspension loop.

1985.214.22

(Illustrated, page 38)





No. 31

# WEAPONS

## 23. AXE (YÜEH)

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze,  $11\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$  in. (29.2 x 19.7 cm.)

Inscribed on both faces of the tang with a single character showing a hand holding a stick inside a cruciform cartouche (*ya fu*).

The flaring, curved blade of this large, broad axe has been badly damaged, but enough of the original beveled cutting edge survives to show that, in its present condition, the axe is nearly complete. The rectangular tang, in dynamic counterpoint to the curvature of the blade, intersects the butt at a slight angle. Two hafting slots and a shaft hole served to secure the axe to its handle.

Both faces of the axe have the same decoration. A stylized animal mask with hooked eyebrows, bulging, spherical eyes with pierced irises, and gaping jaws fills the top half of the blade. Another small frontal mask takes the place of the nose. Enclosed within the pointed teeth and long fangs is the figure of a curled-up dragon. In contrast to the high-relief decoration on the blade, the tang is decorated in an intaglio design of addorsed birds flanking a cruciform cartouche that encloses the character *fu* ("father").

Although the ornamentation of this axe appears to be unique, a number of its decorative elements and the same inscription appear on other Shang axes (see Karlgren, 1945, nos. 42–55, pls. 8–10; Fong, no. 23; *Yin hsü Fu Hao mu*, col. pl. 13:1).

Published: Kleijkamp, no. 1, pl. 4 (where the piece is mistakenly described as having turquoise, black lacquer, and gold inlays); Katz, no. 4.

1985.214.23

(Illustrated, page 8)

## 24. AXE (YÜEH)

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze,  $9\frac{13}{16} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$  in. (23.3 x 16.2 cm.)

The expressive power of this axe resides chiefly in its dramatic silhouette. The nearly rectangular, but subtly concave, hafting tang sets off the dynamic, asymmetrical curves of the blade.

Both faces of the axe are identically ornamented. A relief animal mask with bulging irises, recumbent C-scroll ears, armlike appendages with sharp claws, and a gaping mouth filled with pointed teeth and curved fangs is shown in profile on either side of the blunt snout. The three hafting slots in the base of the blade, the oval shaft hole in the tang, and the pro-

jecting ears of the mask all served to anchor the axe to its handle. Animal masks with clawed appendages, cast in intaglio on both faces of the tang, echo the masks on the blade. This yin-yang opposition of intaglio decoration on the tang with relief ornament on the blade is a common feature of Shang axes (see Karlgren, 1945, nos. 40–55, pls. 8–10).

1985.214.24

(Illustrated)



No. 24



No. 25

## 25. AXE

Western Chou dynasty, 11th–8th c. B.C.

Bronze,  $3\frac{11}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$  in. (9.3 x 13.3 cm.)

This axe head, of nomadic origin, is distinguished from axes produced in central China both by its shape and by its manner of hafting. A long tubular socket, oval in cross section, its open ends reinforced by protruding lips, provides the method of hafting. A small loop extends from one edge vertically along the socket back. Adjacent to this loop is a sturdy rectangular tang with a constricted waist. The distinctive oval blade juts out of the socket directly opposite this tang. The point of juncture is marked on the socket by a raised-line design of triangles and circles that may echo an earlier method of hafting whereby the blade was attached to the shaft by means of rivets through V-shaped tabs. One face of the blade is ornamented with an intaglio starlike figure with five comma-shaped rays radiating from a circular center.

Similar axes have been excavated near Peking and in Liaoning Province (see Rawson, 1980, pl. 76; Andersson, 1932, pp. 240–41, pl. 10:2; and Yetts, vol. I, pl. 69A).

1985.214.30

(Illustrated)



No. 26

## 26. KNIFE

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze with turquoise inlay,  $10\frac{5}{16} \times 1\frac{9}{16}$  in. (27.8 x 4 cm.)

This knife is an exceptionally large and well-sculpted example of a type that has been excavated in great numbers from the late Shang capital site at An-yang, Honan, but that may have been inspired by or imported from the nomadic peoples inhabiting the neighboring Steppes region of northern China and Mongolia.

The blade and handle describe a single continuous arc terminating in a horse's head that strongly recalls Scythian and Ordos images. The curved cutting edge, broad blade, and blunt back all enhance its value as a cutting tool. The three-dimensional horse-head pommel has swept-back ears, protruding circular eyes with turquoise beads for irises, a flat forehead accented with a diamond-shaped turquoise chip, shallow circular depressions for nostrils, and a round muzzle with a deeply recessed line for the mouth. Oblique hatchmarks along the top edge of the handle suggest the mane. The turquoise inlays that ornament the handle grip appear to be modern restorations.

For similar knives see Karlgren, 1945, nos. 174–79, pl. 31.

Published: Katz, no. 5.

1985.214.26

(Illustrated)



No. 28

## 27. FINIAL

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze, height  $5\frac{1}{16}$  in. (12.8 cm.)

This two-pronged prod or finial takes the form of a conical shaft surmounted by back-to-back water buffalo heads. Each face combines the massive horns, protruding ears, and tapered muzzle of a water buffalo with feline eyes and an anthropomorphic nose and eyebrows. Schematically rendered animal masks confront these faces at the base of the shaft. A circular hole perforates the shaft in the space between.

A number of similar pieces have been published (see Kleijkamp, no. 3; Karlgren, 1948, pl. 20:2 and 1952, no. 73; and one with buffalo horns surmounting a human head in *The Frederick M. Mayer Collection*, no. 221).

1985.214.38

## 28. HALBERD (KO)

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  x  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in. (21.6 x 7 cm.)

The form of the *ko* dagger-axe is unique to China. Hafted perpendicularly, the tapered blade curves slightly downward. In this example, the interplay of relief and intaglio ornament, identically repeated on both faces of the weapon, recalls its similar handling on the axe discussed above (see no. 24). The base of the blade is ornamented with a frontal animal mask cast in high relief and composed of eyes with bulging irises, leaf-shaped ears, and snail horns that project from the surface at an angle. A similar-looking creature with a large head, bottle horns, and a long, serpent-like coiled tail has been cast in intaglio on the tang. When hafted, the head of this creature would be covered by the shaft, so that the coiled tail would appear to belong to the animal head on the blade, creating the illusion that the beast had entered the shaft at one side and reemerged with new prominence on the other. The main animal's projecting horns, together with the rectangular projections at the base of the blade, would have helped to secure the halberd to its handle.

1985.214.25

(Illustrated)

## 29. HALBERD (KO)

Eastern Chou dynasty, 6th–5th c. B.C.

Bronze inlaid with copper, turquoise, malachite, and tenorite (?),  $10\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$  in. (27.3 x 12.4 cm.)

Inscribed on one side of the blade with six characters in ornamental “bird script.”

Elaborate inlay decorations and an elegant “bird script” inscription embellish the tang and blade of this halberd. Both sides of the tang are ornamented with the same decoration: a rectilinear meander of double lines is enclosed on three sides by a fretwork pattern of triangular spirals inlaid with copper. The peculiar meander makes no sense as a pattern and may well be a stylized character. The recessed lines of the meander still retain fragments of turquoise, malachite, and a dark substance that may be tenorite. The narrow interstices between the double outlines also contain both turquoise chips and the dark compound. On the blade, the intaglio lines of the cast inscription, elaborated to resemble stylized birds, have been inlaid with copper.

Bird script was commonly employed by the eastern coastal states of Wu and Yueh around the end of the Spring and Autumn period (770–476 B.C.), but weapons with this script have also been found in a Ch'u tomb in Hupeh and at a Chin site in Shansi (see *Hsin Chung kuo ch'u t'u wen wu*, pl. 69; *Wen wu* 1962/4–5, pp. 5, 35–36).

1985.214.29

## 30. HALBERD (KO)

Eastern Chou dynasty, 6th–4th c. B.C.

Bronze with silver inlay,  $9\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{15}{16}$  in. (24.4 x 12.5 cm.)

Inscribed on one side of the tang: *Ling Shan chin*, “Spirit Mountain metal.”

By Eastern Chou times, the Shang-style *ko* halberd (see no. 28) had evolved into a new form, an L-shaped blade, with the lower edge extending along the shaft of the handle. The blade is affixed to the handle by means of a slotted tang set at right angles to a vertical, T-shaped hafting flange with several adjacent hafting slots. This halberd is distinguished by a geometric silver decoration inlaid into both sides of its tang. The three characters cast in intaglio along the upper edge of the tang in a place where they would normally be covered by the shaft may represent a maker's mark, perhaps identifying the location from which the halberd's metal was mined.

1985.214.28

## 31. SPEARHEAD (MAO)

Eastern Chou dynasty, 6th–4th c. B.C.

Bronze with metallic inlay,  $10\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{16}$  in. (27.3 x 5.4 cm.)

This spearhead presents a subtle interplay of straight and curved lines. Viewed from the side, the spearhead is a simple wedge, defined by the raised spine that forms the axis of each face. Viewed frontally, the broad blade has the curved profile of a leaf extending from the straight-sided socket. Near the curved cutout base of the socket the raised spine becomes a grooved slot, with the point of intersection marked by a small animal mask with a projecting loop at the base of its snout. A shriveled portion of the wooden shaft still survives inside the socket.

The most remarkable feature of the spearhead is the pattern of intersecting double lines and diamond lozenges that decorates all but the cutting edges of the blade. Created by a process that is not completely understood today, the pattern is thought to have been made either by resist-etching or by the surface deposition of tin, ferric chloride, or ferric sulfate.

A number of swords, spearheads, and halberds of this period are decorated with similar variegated surface patterns; some also bear inscriptions attributing their manufacture or ownership to the kings of Yueh, the state that dominated the central east coast of China after its conquest of Wu in 473 B.C. until its own defeat by Ch'u in 334 B.C. A sword excavated from a Ch'u tomb in Chiang-ling, Hupeh, and inscribed as belonging to the Yueh king Kou Chien (r. 496–465 B.C.) has a variegated surface pattern identical to that on this spearhead (see *Hsin Chung kuo ch'u t'u wen wu*, pl. 69). For a comparable spearhead see Watson, 1962, col. pl. C and p. 66. A stone spearhead of similar silhouette inscribed with the characters “King of Yueh” was discovered in 1957 near Shao-hsing, Chekiang, in the heartland of the old Yueh kingdom (see *K'ao ku* 1965/5, pl. 10:9 and pp. 256–57).

1985.214.27

(Illustrated, page 40)

### 32. FERRULE

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–4th c. B.C.

Bronze,  $6\frac{7}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$  in. (17.5 x 3.8 cm.)

This ferrule, a metal cap for enclosing the end of a halberd or spear shaft, is remarkable for the zoomorphic elaborations of its form. The lower half of the ferrule resembles a horse's hoof and foreleg grasped in the jaws of a downward-facing dragon with large, curved fangs, a duckbill-like snout, and bulging, round eyes. The surfaces of the beast's head are embellished with a variety of finely cast details including hairlike striae and spiral arabesques. Simpler crisscross arabesques ornament the horse's foreleg. Above this dragon is a smaller, feline head oriented toward the rear. This head is intricately detailed, with bared fangs protruding from below a blunt snout, round eyes, and comma-shaped horns or ears. Even skin and fur are suggested by curved striae and granular texturing. Behind this head a clawed foot with bared talons and scaly fingers reaches upward, clutching a comma-shaped protrusion that echoes the curved topknot of the dragon. Above this, the smooth forward face of the ferrule is flanked by a band with intaglio crisscross arabesques.

The boldly modeled and intricately textured features on this ferrule—comma patterns, granulation, striae, and scales—which are very similar to elements of the so-called Li-yü style of the early fifth century B.C., make it possible to date this piece on stylistic grounds to the late fifth or fourth century B.C. (see Fong, pp. 258–63).

1985.214.31

### 33. FERRULE

Eastern Chou dynasty, 4th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze,  $6\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$  in. (16.2 x 4.4 cm.)

Both the form and the yellow-brown patina of this ferrule identify it as belonging to a large group of similar fittings produced around the modern city of Shou-hsien in Anhui Province, the site of the Ch'u State capital between 241 and 233 B.C. The most distinctive feature of this group is the image of a bird, modeled in relief, between a long, tapered leg, often sculpted to resemble the hind leg and hoof of a horse, and a straight-sided collar (see Karlbeck, pp. 68–74, pls. 12–14).

In this example, the bird is decorated with comma-like projections, an incised pattern of scales, and S-shaped spirals. In addition to similar pieces identified by Karlbeck as coming from Shou-hsien (see especially pl. 12:1–5), a related piece has been excavated from a Ch'u tomb of mid-Warring States date located near O-ch'eng, Hupeh (see *K'ao ku* 1978/4, pl. 8:5).

1985.214.32

### 34. FERRULE

Han dynasty, 2nd–1st c. B.C.

Bronze with gold inlay,  $5\frac{11}{16} \times 1\frac{11}{16}$  in. (14.4 x 4.3 cm.)

This unusual ferrule transforms the discrete horse and bird motifs seen on earlier ferrules (see no. 33) into a single, integrated image. A powerful bird head with projecting hooked beak and curved topknot, bushy eyebrows, and batlike ears is set atop an anthropomorphic body. This bird-man bends its arms backward so that its fearsome talons—which take the place of hands—wrap behind the ears. The figure's torso is defined by a tapered waist, V-shaped groin, and cutawaylike tail that extends part way down the back of the base. The base retains the profile of a horse's leg, but has been creased in front to suggest a pair of human legs. The entire body is covered with curvilinear arabesques inlaid with gold foil or wire. A figured band inlaid with gold encircles the straight-sided collar rising from the bird-man's head.

A very similar bird-man ferrule was excavated in 1965 from a first-century B.C. tomb discovered in the Huai River valley near Lien-shui, Kiangsu (see *K'ao ku* 1973/2, p. 83, fig. 4:2).

1985.214.33

(Illustrated)



No. 34



No. 35

# MISCELLANEOUS METALWORK



No. 36

## 35. APPLIQUE IN THE FORM OF A DRAGON

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze, length  $2\frac{1}{16}$  in. (6.8 cm.)

This thin, slightly convex bronze piece has a smooth back and a top surface ornamented in low relief with intaglio designs. The serpentlike dragon forms a reverse curve, with the gaping mouth of its enlarged head touching its tightly curled tail. The jaws of the beast end in out-turned hooks, as does its bovinelike horn. The remainder of the face is dominated by a large eye with a protruding, ovoid iris. The body of the creature is incised with a scale pattern of chevrons that grow smaller and more tightly spaced toward the tail. A fin segmented with incised lines and recalling the flanges on some Shang bronze vessels runs along the creature's back, while a single arm with a pointed elbow and clawed hand protrudes from the belly.

Published: Karlgren, 1961, pl. 2:3.

1985.214.39

(Illustrated, pages 1, 46)

## 36. FITTING

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bronze inlaid with turquoise, length  $6\frac{1}{8}$  in. (15.5 cm.)

This unusual fitting resembles an ibex with a long, arching neck projecting from a flat, rectangular body with a tectiform top and straight sides. Three convex, ovoid pods are attached to each side. The perimeter of each pod is incised with hatchmarks so that they vaguely resemble cowrie shells. The butt end of the body is similarly incised. The ibex's head is boldly modeled with a bulbous flattened muzzle, round nostrils

inlaid with turquoise chips, a slit mouth, and cylindrical projections on either side of the head inlaid with circular turquoise chips for eyes. Horns, suggested by two long strips, run from the top of the head to the base of the neck and are supported by two thin struts. The top surface of each horn is articulated by incised lines and hatchmarks; two round bosses connect the two horns at their midpoint and tips. The concave underside of the body is spanned by two bands that may have aided in securing it to another surface.

The closest parallels to this fitting are daggers with ram-head terminals, embellished with turquoise inlays and hatchmark designs, that have been excavated from the site of the last Shang capital at An-yang, Honan. This group of weapons and fittings, so distinct from typical Shang vessels and weapons in style and possibly the method of casting (lost wax rather than ceramic piece mold), may be part of a wave of foreign influence that entered China with the introduction of the chariot around the time of the Shang king Wu-ting (13th c. B.C.; Bunker, private correspondence). A nearly identical fitting is in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (B60B 663).

1985.214.85

(Illustrated)



37. PLAQUE WITH ANTHROPOMORPHIC FACE

Late Shang–Western Chou dynasty, 11th–10th c. B.C.  
Bronze, diameter  $1\frac{5}{16}$  in. (4.9 cm.)

This circular plaque is modeled in the form of a human face. The bald head and slightly tapered chin present a nearly circular contour interrupted only by the stylized, C-scroll ears. The cylindrical eyes, broad, fleshy nose, and lips all stand in relief. Perforations define the irises, nostrils, and grimacing tooth-filled mouth. Circular depressions frame the eyes and give definition to the bridge of the nose; along the upper crest of these depressions are traces of incised hatch-marks suggesting eyebrows.

A larger plaque (diam.  $4\frac{5}{16}$  in.) with a very similar face was excavated from an early Western Chou tomb at Ho-chia-ts'un, Ch'i-shan, Shensi (see *K'ao ku* 1976/1, pl. 3:2; and *Shensi ch'u t'u Shang Chou ch'ing t'ung ch'i*, pl. 40 [where the plaque is published as late Shang]).

1985.214.91

38. CHARIOT LINCHPIN

Western Chou dynasty, 11th–9th c. B.C.  
Bronze, height  $4\frac{1}{4}$  in. (10.8 cm.)

Designed to secure the wheel to its axle, this linchpin is composed of a flat, rectangular stem surmounted by a boldly cast three-dimensional tiger's head. The alert beast has erect ears, bulging pupils, and a grinning mouth lined with teeth. Other details are drawn in intaglio lines. Behind the head is a plate with a rounded top edge and a concave bottom. A circular perforation through the neck of the tiger and a rectangular slot in the lower portion of the stem facilitated anchoring the linchpin in place.

1985.214.35

(Illustrated)



No. 38

39, 40. PAIR OF CHARIOT LINCHPINS

Western Chou dynasty, 11th–9th c. B.C.

Bronze, height  $4\frac{3}{8}$  in. (11.1 cm.)

On the top of each linchpin is the figure of a crouching rabbit with swept-back ears, round, protruding eyes, intaglio arabesque patterns on the legs and body, and a tapered head resting on its outstretched front paws. The perforation defining the belly of each rabbit together with the two slots in the stem served to secure the pin to the axle cap. In profile, the pin forms an irregular trapezoid tapered to conform to the tapered end of the axle. At the back of each rabbit is a crescent-shaped plate pierced with two circular holes.

Published: Kleijkamp, no. 5, pl. 7.

1985.214.36.37

(Illustrated)



Nos. 39 (left), 40 (right)

41, 42. PAIR OF FITTINGS IN THE FORM OF BIRDS

Western Chou dynasty, 11th–10th c. B.C.

Bronze,  $5\frac{3}{16} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$  in. (13.2 x 7 cm.)

The erect heads and sturdy necks of these birds rise prominently from their flattened, slightly convex bodies. Each bird has the same features. The head is spherical with a long, curved beak, protruding circular eyes, ridged eyebrows with incised curls, and a creased prominence with chevron hatchmarks that travels across the crown from the base of the beak to the top of the neck. Comma-shaped curls are symmetrically arrayed underneath the beak, while around the neck runs an incised double ring filled with arabesques. Below this collar the body assumes a teardrop form with backswept, pointed wings flanking a long, bifurcated tail. The layered plumage of the wings is described by beveled planes radiating at oblique angles from the body; tail feathers are suggested by parallel incised lines. The top surface of the body is ornamented with an intaglio cicada design. The taloned feet, thrust out ahead of the body, are drawn in incised lines on a rounded apron that extends in front of the neck. The slightly concave, unornamented underside features a sturdy ring.

1985.214.40.41

43, 44. PAIR OF BRIDLE CHEEKPIECES

Western Chou dynasty, 11th–10th c. B.C.

Bronze, height  $3\frac{13}{16}$  in. (9.6 cm.)

The ornamentation of these cheekpieces reflects their function. Each convex disk is decorated in high relief with a coiled dragon, whose gaping jaws and immense curved fangs enclose the central perforation as if to grasp the bit in its mouth. The animal is further distinguished by its circular eye (also perforated), a C-scroll ear, and incised arabesques on the body. Bridle traces were attached to the U-shaped ring at the bottom of each disk, while a radial arrangement of three rings on the concave interior served to fasten padding.

1985.214.42,43

45, 46. PAIR OF BRIDLE CHEEKPIECES

Western Chou dynasty, 10th–9th c. B.C.

Bronze, height  $3\frac{3}{4}$  in. (9.5 cm.)

Similar in form to the cheekpieces described above, each of these fittings is decorated with the head of a bird with a round, protruding eye with a small perforation to mark the iris, a curved beak, a quail-like topknot, and an attenuated neck that tapers to a point as it curves around to touch the bird's forehead. Four rings are symmetrically disposed around the circumference of the concave interior.

A related pair of cheekpieces with simpler, comma-shaped decoration was excavated from a mid-Western Chou tomb in Chi-shan hsien Shensi (see *Shensi ch'u t'u Shang Chou ch'ing t'ung ch'i*, no. 161). Similarly decorated cheekpieces from the Paul Singer Collection and from a Western Chou tomb in P'ing-ting hsien, Honan, have also been published (see Bunker et al., no. 62; *Wen wu* 1984/12, p. 32, fig. 12).

1985.214.44,45

47. FITTING

Western Chou dynasty, 10th–9th c. B.C.

Bronze, length  $3\frac{5}{8}$  in. (9.2 cm.)

This unusual device consists of a rectangular anchoring pin attached to a pivoting head. One end of the rather crudely finished pin is slotted, resembling in cross section an I-beam; the interior end of the slot has a square perforation through which a peg could be inserted to anchor the pin in place. The pivoting head is attached by a rod to a hollow cylinder at the other end of the pin. This head, which rotates through an arc of about 270 degrees, is made up of a flat, ovoid plate from which an elephant head with a curving trunk projects. The front of the plate, behind the elephant head, is ornamented with three radiating petals. Enough space remains between the cylinder and the interior of the loop to fasten a rope or strap.

1985.214.46

#### 48. RING HANDLE WITH MASK

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–4th c. B.C.

Bronze,  $3\frac{7}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  in. (8.7 x 6.4 cm.)

Projecting from the base of a stylized animal-mask escutcheon is a beaklike loop to which the ring handle is attached. Both this loop and the ring are decorated with fine intaglio arabesques and volutes. The piece was mounted onto a wooden casket or piece of furniture by the square pin projecting from the back of the mask. The features of the animal mask have dissolved into a symmetrical array of raised commas, curls, and a pair of dragons with serpentine bodies and gaping mouths that face outward in the upper corners of the escutcheon. The surface is further embellished with cast intaglio patterns of scales, spirals, and granulation.

Both the design and the pale yellow-green patina of this fitting recall similar “Huai-style” mounts excavated from Ch’u tombs located in the Shou-hsien region of Anhui (see Karlbeck, pls. 35–38). Two identical escutcheons were formerly in the Mayer Collection (see *The Frederick M. Mayer Collection*, no. 214). For a similar ring handle with a more legible animal mask, see Gyllensvärd and Pope, no. 36.

1985.214.47

#### 49. ACROBAT

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze, height 4 in. (10.2 cm.)

Despite its asymmetric pose, this figure achieves a dynamic equilibrium in its stance that is entirely appropriate to an acrobat. The tension of balancing is conveyed through the flexed arms and legs. The right leg is only slightly bent, so that the right foot stands squarely on the ground. The left leg, however, is sharply bent so that only the toes of the left foot touch the ground. The figure’s arms and hands are deliberately poised: the right arm reaches across the chest, with the palm of the hand open; the left arm, held out to the side at shoulder level, is cocked at the elbow while the hand makes a fist. Although the object the man once balanced on his left hand is now missing, a nearly identical figure in the Freer Gallery, the mirror image of the Erickson piece, balances a bear atop a pole. The enlarged hollow bottom of the pole fits over that figure’s clenched right fist (see Lawton, no. 37; *The Freer Gallery of Art*, no. 11).

The figure’s costume is minutely observed. The man wears a short robe secured around the waist by a belt from which hangs a dagger. The fact that he wears trousers and boots, items of Steppes dress first introduced into China around the fifth century B.C., may mean that he represents a northern nomad

rather than a Han Chinese. The bronze figure of a youth holding two sticks in his hands, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (see Fontein and Pal, no. 61), and the wrestlers in the Spencer-Churchill Collection (see Bachhofer, fig. 17) are additional miniature sculptures of nomadic figures.

When the Erickson figure entered the Museum its right foot was attached by a wedge-shaped piece of soft solder to the back of a toad, making it appear that the acrobat was balancing on one leg. Such a pose fails to explain the bent toes of the left foot, which lie in the same plane as the sole of the right foot and which indicate that both feet were intended to stand on the same level surface. Further evidence of the unrelatedness of the figure and the toad is provided by spectrographic analysis, which reveals that the two have different elemental compositions.

Published: Bachhofer, p. 317 and pl. facing p. 326; *Exhibition of Chinese Art*, no. 73; Lee, fig. 42; and Katz, no. 18.

1985.214.48

(Illustrated)



No. 49

50. FITTING

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.  
Bronze, height  $2\frac{13}{16}$  in. (6.8 cm.)

This fitting consists of two rings connected by a cylindrical pin with a constricted waist. The upper ring, which is stationary, is modeled to resemble a two-headed serpent. The lower ring, which is attached to the pin by means of a small collar that fits loosely around the pin's waist, rotates freely. This ring is sculpted to resemble a pair of birds with joined tail feathers forming a loop. The feet of the birds come together and form a pedestal for the connecting pin. The olive-green patina of the piece is characteristic of bronzes coming from southern China and may provide a clue as to the origins of this unusual object.

1985.214.51

51, 52. PAIR OF APPLIQUES IN THE FORM OF WINGED TIGERS

Eastern Chou dynasty, 6th–3rd c. B.C.  
Silver, length  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in. (21.6 cm.)

Although not identical, these two tigers were shaped according to the same design by working thin sheets of silver in repoussé. The head of each tiger is a conventional animal mask attached to an undulating, serpentine body with stubby legs, finlike wings, and a broad, curled tail. Stylized features, such as the blunt, upturned snouts, or the raised double line that runs from the base of the head to the tip of the tail, contrast with the more naturalistic treatment of the bulging shoulder and hip muscles and taloned paws.

1985.214.53,54

53. FINIAL IN THE FORM OF A BIRD

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.  
Bronze inlaid with gold and silver, length  $2\frac{5}{16}$  in. (7.5 cm.)

This finial takes the form of a bird with a feline head, sinewy legs ending in taloned claws, and a long, solidly cast tail that extends horizontally from the openwork body. The surface of the bird is almost entirely covered with pieces of heavy gold and silver foil cut into abstract volutes and arabesques that evoke the plumage or musculature of the creature.

A similar finial crowning the shaft of a *ko* dagger-axe suggests that this piece, too, functioned as a pole cap for a weapon (see Rawson, 1980, pl. 105-d). Two other early inlaid bronze examples have been published (see *Osaka Exchange Exhibition*, no. 70; Gyllensvärd and Pope, no. 23).

1985.214.56

54, 55. TWO BIRD-HEAD FINIALS

Eastern Chou or early Western Han dynasty, 5th–1st c. B.C.  
Bronze, length  $3\frac{7}{16}$  in. (8.8 cm.)

Each of these tubular finials terminates with the expressive head of a shrieking bird. The features of the bird's head are vividly described with raised curls and incised lines. The roosterlike topknot merges with a small loop at the back of the head. The naturalism and ferocity of the image, epitomized by the bird's wide, open beak, recall the birds of prey portrayed in the art of the Steppes nomads.

These fittings probably served as finials on the spines of a large parasol of the type mounted atop chariots. The canopy would have been attached to the loops at the backs of the birds' heads, while the irregular, crudely cutout holes on the sockets would have served to pin the finials to the spokes of the parasol. For a reconstruction of such a parasol with a slightly different style of bronze finial, see Lawton, no. 20. An identical finial is published by Schloss, no. 55.

1985.214.49,50

56. FITTING IN THE FORM OF A STYLIZED DUCK HEAD

Han dynasty, 2nd–1st c. B.C.  
Bronze, length  $5\frac{3}{16}$  in. (13.2 cm.)

This unusual object probably served as either a vessel spout or the chimney for a lamp. The basic form is a tapered piece of pipe bent at about a 30-degree angle. The subtly sculpted form is accentuated by deeply grooved lines that divide the pipe into three parts: a short neck, an oblate head, and a long, tubular beak with cutout sides that suggest an open mouth.

1985.214.55



No. 57

# 57. PLAQUE IN THE FORM OF A DEMON

Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220

Bronze with iron,  $3\frac{11}{16} \times 4\frac{1}{16}$  in. (9.3 x 10.3 cm.)

This plaque takes the form of an anthropomorphic figure squatting on its haunches with both hands resting on its flexed knees. The monster's large feline head, dominated by a grimacing, tooth-filled mouth and round, bulging eyes, grows directly out of the chest with no sign of a neck. Its long, straight hair, pointed ears, and the short wings projecting from its arms stand erect as if swept up by a strong wind. An iron nail piercing the body just below the mouth has left rust spots on the face and well-defined breasts.

This figure shares many of the same features as one holding a variety of weapons that is incised on a stone column in the large, third-century tomb excavated at I-nan (see Tseng et al., pl. 33).

1985.214.52

(Illustrated)

# 58. HAIRPIN IN THE FORM OF A DRAGON-HEAD STAFF

T'ang dynasty or earlier

Silver with glass inlay, length  $9\frac{7}{8}$  in. (25.1 cm.)

The top seven inches of this sturdy pin have been modeled to resemble a wooden staff with its crooklike end carved in the form of a dragon head. Knotholes and diagonal striations along the shaft of the pin recall an ancient branch of cedar or cypress. The knot-holes and striations continue up the neck of the dragon and complete the illusion that the head, too, was carved from the same gnarled length of wood. The head is intricately detailed with a combed mane, bristling whiskers and eyebrows, canine snout, bulging eyeballs, protruding tongue, and prominent fangs. The wealth of detail makes it clear that the sculptor could create any likeness he desired, yet the head bears little resemblance to Sung or later images of dragons, which suggests that the piece stems from an early date, perhaps even pre-T'ang. Dragon-head staffs are an attribute of Taoist sages and immortals; this hairpin, therefore, would have been a subtle declaration of the philosophical inclinations of the man who wore it.

1985.214.18

(Illustrated, detail, page 11)



No. 59

## 59. WATER BUFFALO

Sung dynasty or earlier

Bronze, 2½ x 4¾ in. (6.4 x 12 cm.)

The appearance and personality of a water buffalo have seldom been more sensitively captured than in this vividly naturalistic small sculpture. The buffalo is not only accurately proportioned but also has a wonderfully informal and expressive pose: the extended neck and lowered head, turned slightly to one side, the extended right legs and flexed left legs, and even the curved tail that brushes the back of the left rear leg all give the impression of ponderous movement, as if the beast were being pulled by a rope. Keenly observed details abound: the cleft hooves, dew claws, and well-articulated knees and hocks of the legs; the broad back, swelling belly, and bony shoulders and withers of the body; and the large head with the whorl of hair on the forehead between massive curved horns, alert ears, large oval eyes, mouth with protruding tongue, and flared nostrils pierced to hold a ring. The circular hole at the top of the buffalo's back may mean that the sculpture served as a support or possibly as a water receptacle, or it may simply have provided a means to attach the figure of a herdboys. Sung paintings often depict a herdboys riding atop a water buffalo's back.

1985.214.92

(Illustrated)



No. 61

# BELTHOOKS



No. 60 (detail)

## 60. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–4th c. B.C.

Bronze inlaid with gold, turquoise, lapis lazuli, silver, and red lead oxide, length 7 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (20 cm.)

The body of this elegant garment fastener forms a wide arc, the top surface of which is rounded, while the back plate is flat. A buttonlike protrusion at the center of the back served to secure the fastener to one end of a belt; a now missing hook would have engaged the other end. The belthook's most outstanding feature is its imbricated surface of small, carved turquoise chips held in place by precisely curved gold cloisons. The turquoise surface is divided into three sections by a gold meander with rectilinear flourishes that resemble stylized dragon heads. The meander is outlined by a single row of gold granules, now largely covered over by black corrosion, and a gold wire border. Fantastic animals shown in profile along the bottom edges of the inlaid surface also ornament each section. The animals in each section are subtly differentiated from those of the other sections: the pair closest to the hook end has lowered heads, deep chests, and short tails (illustrated above); the damaged middle pair has smooth torsos and crouches lower to the ground; the rear pair has long tails and raised heads. The bodies of all six animals are inlaid with precisely carved chips of lapis lazuli and silver wire. Each head is

inlaid with a red lead oxide paste. The neck of the belthook is completely sheathed in gold worked with relief designs of dragons embellished with turquoise inlays. The neck is divided from the inlaid body by a collar of gold granules bordered by strands of gold wire grooved to resemble twisted rope. Above this collar the frontal mask of a bird and two teardrop pieces of turquoise ornament the spine, while sinuous dragons and arabesques inlaid with turquoise dots decorate the sides. The broken hook was probably sculpted to represent the head of a dragon. The back plate and button of the belthook are covered with silver foil. Faint, incised curvilinear and geometric designs in the back plate resemble an artist's doodle.

Related garment hooks, associated with the finds at Chin-ts'un, near Lo-yang, Honan, are in the Freer Gallery and Singer collections (see Lawton, nos. 49, 50; Loehr, 1965, no. 88; White, pl. 56, no. 135).

Published: Umehara, 1937, pl. 94:1.

1985.214.62

(Illustrated, detail)





No. 62

#### 61. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze inlaid with gold and silver, length  $6\frac{1}{16}$  in. (15.4 cm.)

This massive hook apparently hung vertically because its openwork body, in the form of a coiled, griffinlike creature, is seen to best advantage with the hook suspended downward. The creature grasps its hind leg in its twin-taloned front paw, contorting its long, sinuous body to form a nearly perfect circle around its bird-like head. The twin-taloned rear leg sweeps downward, while an extravagant loop of plumage projects from the creature's body at the top end of the buckle. Small comma-shaped tufts of plumage, including a small wing that projects from the shoulder of the beast, further ornament the animal's silhouette. Similar comma shapes, volutes, striations, and dots worked in silver foil cover the entire body of the animal. The feline-head hook of the buckle is additionally ornamented with two dots of gold inlay for the eyes. In contrast to this dense use of silver foil, the reverse side of the belthook is ornamented with thin incised-line arabesques inlaid with silver wire.

1985.214.60

(Illustrated, page 54)

#### 62. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou dynasty, 4th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze inlaid with gold and silver, length  $5\frac{5}{16}$  in. (14.1 cm.)

A flamboyant creature with clawed appendages, beak mouth, and large, leaf-shaped ears—much like the fantastic beast depicted in the garment fastener described above—is here shown in an almost playful, reclining posture. The beast's languorous pose, with its serpentine body, attenuated rear legs, and spindly arms, contrasts with the straight, tapered stem and the compact, feline features of the hook. The inlaid gold and silver ornament maintains the contrast. The alternating bands of striations, granulation, and foil sheets embellishing the irregularly faceted surfaces of the beast accentuate its curvilinear character; the patterns on the tapered stem—including triangles, crisscrossed bird heads, and scales—are basically geometric and symmetrical. The backside of the belthook is unornamented.

1985.214.61

(Illustrated)

#### 63. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou dynasty, 4th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze inlaid with gold and silver, length  $4\frac{1}{8}$  in. (10.5 cm.)

The butt resembles a water buffalo, with large, round eyes and a blunt muzzle. Behind this, on the top face, is a trefoil pattern inlaid with gold and silver wires and dots. The tapered stem is decorated with a triangular shape filled with a dense array of parallel gold wires. The tip of this triangle is flanked by two much smaller triangular areas filled with silver dots. The stem terminates in an animal-head hook.

1985.214.68

#### 64. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou dynasty, 4th–3rd c. B.C.

Gilt bronze, length 1½ in. (3.8 cm.)

This small example takes the form of a duck with its head facing backward over its body to form the hook. Comma-shaped whorls and three overlapping arcs form the wings and fan-shaped tail feathers of the bird; the nose, eyes, and ears are delineated with incised lines. Traces of gilding indicate that the entire top surface of the buckle was once covered with gold; the backside is plain.

A similar duck-shaped buckle was excavated from a Ch'in State tomb near Feng-hsiang, Shensi (see *K'ao ku yü wen wu* 1981/1, p. 30).

1985.214.74

#### 65. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou or Western Han dynasty, 4th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze inlaid with gold, silver, and turquoise, length 8 in. (20.3 cm.)

The arched body of this belthook is ornamented with a rectangular panel with a gold band border that encloses a series of repeating abstract designs. Dominant are three identical masklike figures with circular turquoise “eyes” and gold-foil features. A second design fills the space between the masks: gold-foil triangles with spiral flourishes and a central turquoise bead are flanked by smaller silver-foil triangles with comma-shaped cutout bases. The flat sides of the belthook are ornamented with alternating gold and silver S-shaped arabesques; the narrow stem and animal-head hook were also once decorated with gold and silver, but most of the inlay has been lost.

Related belthooks of similar shape and design have been excavated from Warring States-period tombs near Chiang-ling, Hupeh, and Ch'ang-chih, Shansi (see Watson, 1973, no. 131; *K'ao ku* 1964/3, pl. 5:19). A simpler version of this belthook is in the Östasiatiska Museet, Stockholm (see Karlgren, 1966, pl. 37, G3).

1985.214.72

#### 66. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou or Western Han dynasty, 3rd c. B.C.

Bronze inlaid with gold and silver, length 7¾ in. (19.7 cm.)

This curved, tubular belthook is divided into two sections by horizontal bands. Each section is ornamented with a crisscross design of spirals and diagonal lines filled with gold and silver wires and dots. Details of the feline-head hook, the floral pattern on the butt, and the spiral arabesque on the face of the button are all drawn with wire inlay.

Related belthooks have been excavated near Lo-yang, Honan and Ch'eng-tu, Szechuan (see *Kao ku hsieh pao* 1954/8, p. 154, pl. 7:8, and 1956/4, p. 15, fig. 18). A very similar belthook with better preserved inlay is now in the Freer Gallery (see Lawton, no. 73).

1985.214.63

#### 67. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou or Western Han dynasty, 4th–2nd c. B.C.

Gilt bronze inlaid with turquoise, length 3¼ in. (7.8 cm.)

The body of this small belthook consists of a trefoil pattern of turquoise surrounding a central bovine mask. Out of the leaves of the trefoil grow two narrow tails, one smooth, the other with regular hatchmarks, which extend backward around the body. The long shaft of the belthook appears to emerge from the mouth of the bovine mask. A narrow trapezoidal recess that probably once held turquoise or some other inlay extends from the mouth of the mask halfway down the shaft. The tapered end of the shaft and the animal-head hook have been bent, distorting the belthook's original shape.

A nearly identical belthook is in the collection of the Östasiatiska Museet, Stockholm (see Karlgren, 1966, pl. 72, P52).

1985.214.64

#### 68. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou or Western Han dynasty, 4th–2nd c. B.C.

Gilt bronze inlaid with turquoise, length 2½ in. (5.3 cm.)

An owl-like mask flanked by outstretched wings decorates the body of this small garment fastener. The plumage of the bird is suggested by shaped pieces of turquoise inlay. Scale-shaped chips of turquoise also extend across the top surface of the fastener's hooked shaft, which culminates in an animal head.

1985.214.65

#### 69. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou or Western Han dynasty, 4th–2nd c. B.C.

Bronze inlaid with silver and gold, length 4 in. (10.2 cm.)

The body of this piece is shaped like a cicada, with a broad head, pointed snout, and beveled, carapacelike back. The head, the perimeter, and the raised median ridge of the back were once covered with gold foil, now mostly gone, while the wings are covered with heavy silver foil. The tapered stem is divided in the middle by a raised double collar. Silver foil encases the shaft below this collar, while the collar itself and the upper shaft, including the animal-head hook, are covered in gold. Except for the incised floral pattern on the face of the button, the backside of the buckle is plain.

1985.214.67

## 70. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou or Western Han dynasty, 4th–1st c. B.C.  
Gilt bronze, length  $3\frac{7}{8}$  in. (9.8 cm.)

This belthook is decorated with a dragonlike creature modeled in rounded relief. The contorted body of the beast is twisted into a figure eight as the animal sinks its jaws and talons into its own back. In contrast to the animated form of the dragon, the animal head of the hook has been simplified nearly beyond recognition.

In many of its features, this animal is related to the creatures described in entries 61 and 62 above: a long sinuous body with projecting fins or plumes, muscular legs with two talons each, and even the same leaf-shaped, pointed ears. The beak mouth of the earlier creatures is here transformed into a blunt snout; more important, the essential linear character of the earlier images with their elaborate inlaid surfaces has been replaced by a greater reliance on plastic modeling.

Two related belthooks, one nearly identical to this one, the other showing the same creature in a more complex, openwork design, have been published in Swedish collections (see Karlgren, 1966, pl. 59, N29a, and Karlgren and Wirgin, no. 50k).

1985.214.70

## 71. BELTHOOK

Western Han dynasty, 3rd–2nd c. B.C.  
Silver inlaid with gold foil; length  $6\frac{1}{8}$  in. (15.5 cm.)

The tapered ends of this solid silver belthook are ornamented with boldly sculpted animal heads covered in gold foil. The massive animal-head hook has a blunt, rounded snout, wide, thin lips, flat forehead, and long, pointed ears that lie back along the curved neck of the hook. A greatly exaggerated variation of this head decorates the butt of the fastener. The attenuated snout of this crocodilelike head has a blunt, rounded end with flared nostrils and a creased median ridge that runs from the tip of the nose to the forehead. A bony protuberance midway up the ridge marks the point where the converging lines of nose and eyebrows meet. The thin-lipped mouth is inlaid with squarish silver teeth as well as two fangs that cause the upper lip to flare open. A straight horn made up of conical sections grows from the beast's forehead and extends backward, between the animal's long, pointed ears, along the arched top of the belthook.

1985.214.69

## 72. BELTHOOK

Western Han dynasty, 3rd–1st c. B.C.  
Gilt bronze inlaid with glass beads, length  $5\frac{1}{16}$  in. (14.1 cm.)

A fantastic animal plastically modeled in much the same fashion as the dragon described in entry 70 decorates this massive belthook. This beast has a distinctive feline head, but shares the sinuous torso, plastic curls and projecting flourishes, and muscular legs with twin-taloned claws of the creatures described above (see nos. 61, 62, 70). Another distinctive feature of this beast consists of the three mottled, white-and-green glass beads that have been inset into its forehead, torso, and tail. The sturdy hook is modeled in the form of a clearly defined animal head with blunt snout and back-swept, pointed ears. The plain back of the buckle also has been gilded.

A similar buckle was formerly in the collection of Osvald Siren (see Palmgren, pl. 50:5).

1985.214.71

## 73. BELTHOOK

Western Han dynasty, 3rd–1st c. B.C.  
Bronze, length  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. (3.2 cm.)

This tiny garment fastener joins a three-dimensional image of a unicorn with a hook in the form of a long-necked bird. The bird has a long, pointed beak, a horn-like topknot, and an attenuated, curved neck textured with a feather pattern of scales with a circular incised dot at the center of each scale. The base of the bird's neck has been flattened to provide a pedestal upon which the unicorn stands. This fantastic beast has a long, straight tail striated to look like twisted rope, a tiger's torso, a horse's legs, and a ram's hooves and head. The animal holds its head erect so that its single, downward-curling horn rests on its back. The beast is further ornamented by incised volutes on its haunches and striations on its belly, chest, and horn.

Related belthooks have been published in Swedish collections (see Karlgren, 1966, pl. 71, P39–44).

1985.214.75

## 74. BELTHOOK

Han dynasty, 1st c. B.C.–1st c. A.D.  
Bronze, length  $3\frac{3}{4}$  in. (9.5 cm.)

This belthook takes the form of a long-necked bird with outstretched wings. The bird's elaborate tail and outspread plumes are suggested by a fan-shaped openwork design. Fine, incised lines define the wing and tail feathers; a pattern of scales and circles describes the softer body plumage. The compact, hawklike head features a hooked beak and sharp, pointed ears.

1985.214.66

## 75. BELTHOOK

Han to Western Chin dynasty, 3rd c. A.D.

Bronze inlaid with gold, silver, ivory, turquoise, and Paris green, length  $4\frac{7}{8}$  in. (12.4 cm.)

A 13-character inscription on the back of the hook may be read "Ping-wu spirit hook, its mouth holds a pearl, its hands grasp a fish. [May the wearer's position] rise to the highest."

The principal feature ornamenting this belthook is an anthropomorphic figure with a beak mouth, long locks of backswept hair, wings growing from its shoulders, and clawed hands and feet. The figure's large, round eyes, a comma-shaped squiggle in the center of its forehead, and the leaf shapes at the bases of its wings are inset with turquoise chips; striations and spirals inlaid with silver and gold add definition to the hair and musculature. The figure clutches a fish as if preparing to take a bite. The fish is carved from ivory with simple incised designs that suggest fins, scales, gills, eye, and mouth. The hook of the fastener terminates in a bird head with a curved beak, open mouth, and eyebrows. What the inscription refers to as a "pearl" is now missing from the beak. As with the standing figure, the features of the bird are accentuated with turquoise, gold, and silver inlays. The other end of the fastener terminates in a fanciful plant-like form with curled limbs and inlaid embellishments. In those places where the original stone inlay has fallen out, a modern paste colored with Paris green (first synthesized in Germany in 1814) has been added. The back surface of the belthook is ornamented with gold, silver, and turquoise inlays. In addition, an inscription is incised in an archaic seal script, then inlaid with silver wire, at the hook end of the fastener.

The recent discovery of this type of hook in a late-third-century Wu Kingdom (220–80) or Western Chin (265–316) tomb excavated near Nanking offers the first concrete evidence for the dating of this piece (see *Wen wu* 1976/3, pp. 55–60, figs. 3 and 16:2). Two other examples with similar inscriptions are in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, and the Musée Guimet, Paris (see Umehara, 1933, pl. 73 a,b). A third inscribed example was formerly in the collection of Desmond Gure (Dubosc, no. 120). Two inscribed examples are in Swedish collections (see Karlgren, 1966, pl. 66, 038, 039; Karlgren and Wirgin, pl. 50L).

1985.214.73

(Illustrated)



No. 75 (front)

No. 75 (back)



No. 78

# EASTERN STEPPES ARTIFACTS

## 76. PLAQUE IN THE FORM OF A TWO-HEADED BEAST

Eastern Steppes, 5th–4th c. B.C.

Bronze, height  $2\frac{5}{16}$  in. (5.8 cm.)

This small plaque takes the form of a coiled animal with two heads. A feline head with fanged jaws protrudes from the top end of the serpentine body; a bird's head with a curved beak terminates the smaller, curled-up end. An openwork fin consisting of joined loops runs down the spine of the animal and connects with the feline's chin. Perforations also define the ears and mouths of the two heads. A simple loop directly behind the ear of the feline provided an inconspicuous means of mounting the piece.

An identical plaque is catalogued by Chatwin as belonging to the Tagar culture of Central Siberia and as dating to the fifth or fourth century B.C. (see Bunker et al., no. 48).

1985.214.81

## 77. ORNAMENT IN THE FORM OF A SERPENT

Eastern Steppes, 5th–3rd c. B.C.

Bronze, height  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in. (7 cm.)

This small ornament takes the form of a snake with an S-curved body, diamond-shaped head, and curled tail. A low-relief pattern of chevrons, divided by a raised spine, runs along the back of the creature. Two circular eyes with protruding irises stand out on the smooth surface of the head. Two broken protrusions that may have originally been hooks, one on the spine of the snake at the apex of the upward curve of its body, the other on the concave underside at the juncture of the body and tail, indicate that the piece served as a buckle.

Buckles in the Metropolitan Museum (24.180.4; Bunker et al., no. 91) and in the Karlbeck Collection (Andersson, 1932, pl. 12:2) with similar curved serpent forms offer close parallels to this piece in both style and function.

1985.214.82

(Illustrated, page 92)



No. 87

# 78. PLAQUE IN THE FORM OF A HORSE

Eastern Steppes, 3rd–1st c. B.C.

Silver,  $3\frac{3}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{16}$  in. (8.1 x 14.5 cm.)

In this striking image of a horse, naturalistic details are fused with abstract forms to convey a sense of pent-up energy. The horse's massive head and haunches, tightly flexed legs, and spearpointlike hooves create a dramatically heightened impression of the animal's physical power. As with Scythian and Altaic animal plaques, certain features of the horse, including the ears, mane, hooves, and joints of the legs, are schematically articulated with recessed lozenges, circles, comma shapes, or grooves. The concave back of the plaque bears a positive impression of a textile pattern. In a process not yet completely understood, cloth was used in the manufacture of such pieces, either to reinforce the original model or to provide a uniform space between the two parts of the mold. The stubs of four hooks on the back of the muzzle and haunch of the horse served to attach the plaque to a leather or cloth backing.

A plaque embossed with a similar profile image of a horse was excavated from a Hsiung-nu tomb of pre-Ch'in dynasty date located in the Chun-ko-erh Banner area of Inner Mongolia near Togtoh in the Ordos region just inside the great bend of the Yellow River (see *Wen wu* 1980/7, pl. 2:6). A silver plaque in the British Museum (see Rawson, 1980, col. pl. IX) and a gilt bronze plaque in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Berlin (see von Ragué, no. 10), are nearly identical mirror images of this example. Both have the same fabric pattern cast into the back, but differ from the Erickson piece in that they have stubby hooks or pins projecting from the center of the horses' muzzles and a pair of holes in their rear haunches.

Published: Bunker et al., no. 116.

1985.214.78

(Illustrated, page 60)

# 79. ORNAMENT IN THE FORM OF AN ANIMAL HEAD

Eastern Steppes, 3rd–1st c. B.C.

Bronze,  $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$  in. (3.2 x 3.4 cm.)

This simple frontal mask vividly conveys the alert character of a predatory animal. The snout, the gaping mouth filled with teeth, and the ovoid eyes stand out in high relief. Erect, pointed ears with perforated interiors interrupt the otherwise circular silhouette of the face. A sturdy loop crosses the concave backside of the mask just above the mouth.

A similar animal mask ornament cast from silver was discovered in a late Warring States– or early Western Han–period site at A-lu-ch'ai-teng, Inner Mongolia, in the Ordos region about forty kilometers east of Hang-chin Banner (see *K'ao ku* 1980/4, p. 335, fig. 3:13 and pl. 12:13).

1985.214.83

# 80. PLAQUE WITH CONFRONTING ANIMAL HEADS

Eastern Steppes, 3rd–1st c. B.C.

Bronze, length  $3\frac{1}{8}$  in. (7.9 cm.)

The face of this plaque is ornamented with two symmetrically arrayed animal masks that confront one another nose to nose, claw to claw. Each of the identical masks has a pointed, foxlike snout, large ovoid eyes, high eyebrows, leaf-shaped ears with deeply recessed interiors, and long curved whiskers below which protrude clawed paws. Since the plaque is attached to a pierced back plate along its top and bottom edges, the open sides form slots through which a belt could be passed. Small slots at the center of the top and bottom edges may have helped secure the plaque in place.

The features of these two animal masks closely resemble those of the ornament described above (see no. 79), making it possible to date this piece on stylistic grounds to the same period. Another similar mask ornament is published by Andersson (1933, pl. 7:3).

1985.214.84

(Illustrated)



No. 80



No. 81 (left), 82 (right)

#### 81, 82. PAIR OF DEER

Eastern Steppes, 3rd–1st c. B.C.  
Bronze,  $3\frac{13}{16} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$  in. (9.6 x 11.4 cm.)

The form of these freestanding sculptures is strongly influenced by their technique of manufacture. The prominent seam line running down the center of the head, chest, and back of each deer shows that they were cast from a two-face clay mold; a clay core is still visible inside the hollow interior of each deer. Each is beautifully modeled: the curved back and chest, muscular haunches, and bony legs are all vividly captured; arrowlike recesses in the otherwise smooth body help define the joints. The long ears, wide eyes, nostrils, and open mouths of the deer are accented with red pigment.

Similar images of deer have been excavated from three Hsiung-nu tombs of pre-dynastic Ch'in date (ca. 3rd c. B.C.) located in the Chun-ko-erh Banner area of Inner Mongolia near Togtoh (see *Wen wu* 1980/7, pl. 1:1–3) and from a find of unspecified date at Su-chi-kou in the same Banner (see *Wen wu* 1965/2, pl. 6). Related images of deer were also excavated from a Han-period Hsiung-nu tomb in the same area (see *K'ao ku* 1977/2, pls. 2–3). An almost identical figure of a doe is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (see Moorey, Bunker, et al., no. 778).

1985.214.88,89

(Illustrated)

#### 83, 84. PAIR OF BIRD-HEAD ORNAMENTS

Eastern Steppes, 3rd–1st c. B.C.  
Bronze, height  $1\frac{5}{8}$  in. (4.2 cm.)

These ornaments take the form of spherical bird heads with curved beaks, large round eyes, and a collar of overlapping feathers. The heads are hollow and open to the back; a vertical strip spanning the interior of the neck provides a means of attachment.

Two bird masks with similar beaks and eyes have been published by Andersson (1932, pl. 26:1,2).

1985.214.86,87

#### 85. PLAQUE

Eastern Steppes, 3rd–1st c. B.C.  
Gilt bronze,  $2\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{16}$  in. (6.6 x 10.9 cm.)

A giant elk ornaments the gilded front of this rectangular plaque. The elk's ungainly form is sensitively observed: long spindly legs supporting a massive body with a humped shoulder, a short tail, and a large head with a thick, bulbous snout and antlers with many points are all defined in high relief against a complex ground of weblike, interconnected lines that may be intended to suggest tree branches. There are perforations between some lines, recalling plaques in which the interstices around the principal design are cut out (see no. 86 below), but for the most part, the plaque forms a solid sheet framed by a raised border. The concave depression on the back of the plaque corresponds to the head and body of the elk. A flat loop projects from the back on either side.

1985.214.76





No. 86

#### 86. PLAQUE WITH TWO YAKS

Eastern Steppes, 3rd–1st c. B.C.  
Bronze,  $2\frac{3}{16} \times 4\frac{5}{16}$  in. (5.5 x 10.9 cm.)

The openwork design of this rectangular plaque features two yaks enclosed within a grooved border. Their massive heads, cast in high relief, are viewed frontally, while the bodies are seen in profile. Horns, ears, hooves, and the stylized clumps of hair on their tails and bodies are rendered in comma-shaped outlines with recessed interiors.

Similar openwork plaques have been excavated from a first-century B.C. tomb in Liaoning (see *Wen wu* 1960/8,9, figs. 3–6) and from a Han site in Inner Mongolia (see *Wen wu ts'an k'ao tzu liao* 1955/6, p. 50). A plaque of identical design is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (see Bunker et al., no. 127; Moorey, Bunker, et al., no. 882).

1985.214.77

(Illustrated)

#### 87. PLAQUE IN THE FORM OF AN IBEX

Eastern Steppes, 3rd–1st c. B.C.  
Gilt bronze, length  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. (8.3 cm.)

This flat plaque takes the form of a kicking ibex with its front legs on the ground and its arched body and extended rear legs thrown upward above its head. The head, curled horns, legs, and tail of the animal are modeled in low relief; the gilt surface is embellished with flat bands and parallel grooves. The unornamented backside of the plaque is flat except for two round pins projecting from behind the head and tail.

1985.214.79

(Illustrated, page 61)

#### 88. FINIAL WITH RAM'S HEAD

Eastern Steppes, 3rd–1st c. B.C.  
Bronze, length  $8\frac{1}{4}$  in. (21 cm.)

The long, rectangular shaft of this finial culminates in the head of a ram with massive, curving horns with deeply incised striations, small raised ears, oval incisions for eyes, a tapered muzzle with a sharp, bony bridge and crescent-shaped nostrils, and a large mouth with protruding tongue. Traces of the clay core are still visible in the hollow interior. A pin or peg once secured the finial through the aligned circular holes that perforate the two side walls of the hollow shaft.

Similar ram-head finials have been excavated from Hsiung-nu tombs of Han date located in the Chun-ko-erh Banner area of Inner Mongolia in the Ordos region near Togtoh (see *Wen wu* 1965/2, p. 46, fig. 4; and *K'ao ku* 1977/2, pl. 3:2).

1985.214.90

#### 89. TIGER PLAQUE WITH ANTELOPE HEADS

Eastern Steppes, 3rd–1st c. B.C.  
Gilt bronze,  $2\frac{3}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{16}$  in. (5.5 x 8.2 cm.)

This plaque takes the form of a crouching tiger with antelope heads projecting from its chest, rump, and tail. The chins and horns of the antelopes connect with the tiger's head, legs, and tail, forming a lively openwork pattern. Cast intaglio lines add definition to the low-relief, gilt surfaces of the heads and horns and the tiger's claws and tail. The flat back of the plaque is unornamented.

1985.214.80

# JADE · STONE AND GLASS



No. 99



No. 90 (detail)

#### 90. COMB

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Jade with traces of cinnabar, 3 x 2 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (7.6 x 6 cm.)

Worked from a flat piece of jade, this subtly shaped comb has an hourglasslike silhouette with a constricted waist marked by three grooves. Below this waist the comb flares gently outward, ending in fifteen sturdy tines whose tips form a graceful arc. A rectangular tang projecting from the curved upper edge has a lateral perforation permitting the comb to be suspended from a cord. The decoration of the comb harmonizes with its shape. Each face is ornamented with a large, finely carved animal mask with well-articulated snout, ears, eyes, eyebrows, jaws, teeth, and curved fangs defined by double contours. One unexplained detail is the uneven spacing of the tines with a gap emphasized by a vertical saw cut.

Two similar combs were excavated in 1976 from the tomb of the Shang royal consort Fu Hao (13th c. B.C.) (see *Yin hsü yü ch'i*, pl. 35).

1985.214.94

(Illustrated, page 21; detail, above)

#### 91. FROG PENDANT

Shang or early Western Chou dynasty, 13th–10th c. B.C.

Jade, length 1 $\frac{5}{16}$  in. (3.3 cm.)

This tiny sculpture of a frog has a flat bottom and a convex top with a ridgeline running from the nose to the pointed tail. Straight saw cuts define the mouth as well as the contours of the flexed legs, which project slightly from the oval body. The round eyes of the frog stand off the top of its head in relief. Two conical holes drilled into the chin and belly of the frog connect to create a loop from which the piece could have been suspended.

Similar frogs carved from bone and inlaid with turquoise were excavated from the tomb of the thirteenth-century Shang royal consort Fu Hao (see *Yin hsü Fu Hao mu*, pl. 38:2).

1985.214.95



## 92. HANDLE-SHAPED SCEPTER

Western Chou dynasty, 11th–10th c. B.C.

Jade, length  $10\frac{5}{16}$  in. (26.1 cm.)

This pale-green tablet with a concave grip and a conical hafting hole resembles a common type of Shang and early Chou jade handle (for an example of such a handle attached to a bronze dagger, see Loehr, 1975, no. 117), but its large size and fully ornamented surfaces suggest that it may have served as a ceremonial scepter.

The tectiform top of the tablet sits atop a concave neck. The sharp edges of this portion have been carved away leaving indentations with flattened sides. The remainder of the body tapers gently inward, the edges becoming blunter as the taper increases. In spite of the prominent hafting hole, the regular pattern of grooves on the flat butt of the tablet, reminiscent of the flanges on jade axes and halberds, suggests that the scepter was never hafted.

The two broad faces of the scepter are identically decorated: double contours and beveled cuts define an intricate design that resembles the superposed images of a totem pole. The upper figure represents a bird whose tail plume curves up over its head and ends under its beak. The bird's claws rest atop the head of a kneeling anthropomorphic figure that, in turn, surmounts addorsed animal masks that face up and down the vertical axis. The upward-facing mask seems to hold the foot of the kneeling figure in its jaws; another such mask facing upward above the kneeling figure's head frames the erect bird in its gaping mouth. Whether these animals are threatening or protective remains unclear. Similarly, a bronze vessel in the Sumitomo Collection depicts a bearlike beast that either shelters or threatens to devour a crouching human figure huddling beneath the monster's open jaws (see Watson, 1962, pl. 36a).

Jades with similar bird and mask motifs have been excavated from early Western Chou tombs (see *Wen wu* 1979/10, p. 34, fig. 8, and 1981/9, p. 23, fig. 19:13). The closest parallels to this piece in shape and function are a scepter in the British Museum and two handles in the Winthrop Collection, Harvard University (see Rawson, 1980, pl. 99, 1975, fig. 1; and Loehr, 1975, nos. 241, 332).

Published: *An Exhibition of Chinese Archaic Jades*, pl. 32:4; Salmony, pl. 13:2.

1985.214.96

(Illustrated)



No. 93

### 93. TIGER

Western Chou dynasty, 11th–9th c. B.C.  
Marble, length 5¾ in. (14.6 cm.)

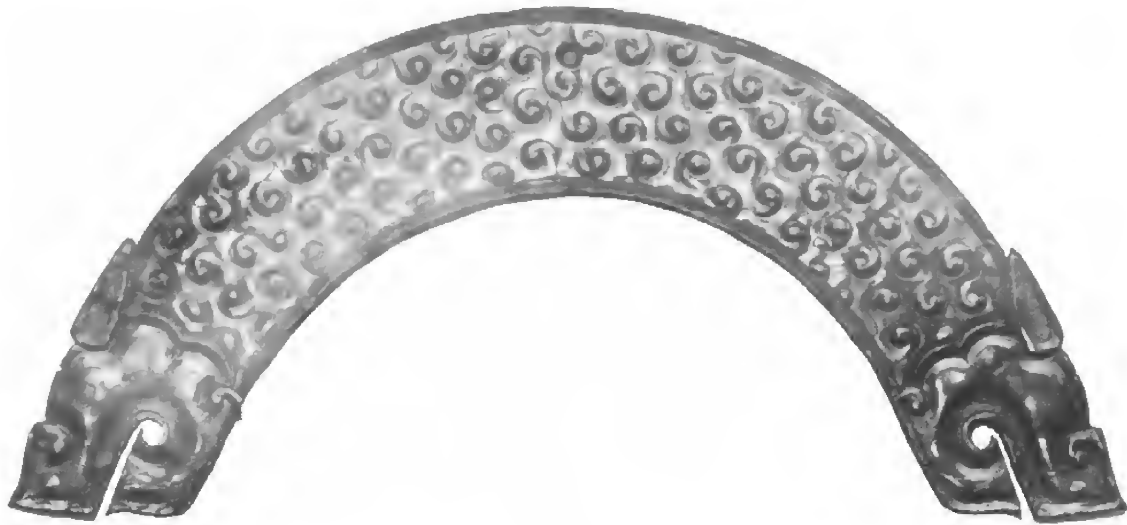
Sculpted, appropriately, from banded black and white marble, the form of this tiger reflects the simple techniques of the early Chinese stone carver. The animal crouches in a pose that minimizes the amount of stone to be removed, betraying the rectangular form of the sawn block from which it was carved. The slablike shoulders and haunches of the animal stand out in low relief from the depressions defining the belly and neck. A crease formed by planes that converge at the center of the forehead and bridge of the nose defines the two sides of the face. The principal features of the face—recumbent C-scroll ears that stand out in high relief, broad snout, and spiral whiskers—have been defined by beveled incised lines. To delineate the irises of the eyes the sculptor first used a tubular drill to make incised rings, then added triangular cuts at either side to create the canthi. Converging conical holes drilled at the corners of the mouth leave fanglike shapes in relief as well as provide two loops to which a slender cord could be fastened. The final curl of the tail has

similarly been suggested by a drilled hole, while straight saw cuts describe the clawed paws.

The function of the three cylindrical receptacles drilled into the back of the tiger is unclear. Bronze and stone vessels in the form of buffalo with four cylindrical receptacles have been identified as palettes or color containers, and possibly the tiger was similarly used (see T. Cheng; *Wen wu* 1965/12, p. 37; and *Shensi ch'u t'u Shang Chou ch'ing t'ung ch'i*, pl. 158). It is also possible that the tiger served as a support or base. Much larger wooden tigers often served as bases for drum stands (see Fontein and Wu, no. 21), and the monumental pair of late Western Chou bronze tigers with slotted backs in the Freer Gallery presumably performed a similar function (see *The Freer Gallery of Art*, no. 10). The similarity in form of this piece to that of the Freer tigers as well as the characteristic Western Chou use of beveled lines to delineate details firmly establish the tiger's date.

1985.214.93

(Illustrated)



No. 95

#### 94. PENDANT IN THE FORM OF A KNOTTED DRAGON

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.  
Jade, height  $3\frac{1}{8}$  in. (7.9 cm.)

A conceptual as well as a technical tour de force, this pendant defies the obdurate character of jade and makes it appear as supple and as pliant as hemp rope. The double-knot design at the bottom of the ring further emphasizes the sculptor's defiance of the nature of the medium. The pendant takes the form of a serpentine dragon whose body is grooved to resemble twisted rope. The two ends of the dragon overlap to form a circular ring. One end has a flattened feline head with gaping jaws, bared fangs, and striations marking the eyebrow and upper lip. The other end loops behind the head and doubles back in an elegant countercurve. The pendant was suspended from a small horizontal perforation drilled through the neck of the dragon, just behind the juncture of the two ends.

For a similar pendant see *Eskenazi, Twenty-five Years*, no. 16.

Published: Salmony, pl. 19:3; Hartman, pp. 211–12 and fig. 4; Na, p. 47, no. 0238.

1985.214.99

(Illustrated on cover)

#### 95. PENDANT ARC (HUANG)

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.  
Jade, length  $4\frac{7}{8}$  in. (12.4 cm.)

This translucent, mottled green jade has been cut into an arc with identical designs carved in relief on both sides and a small suspension hole perforating its apex. The ends of the arc are decorated with elaborately fashioned animal heads, while the area in between is filled with a regular array of raised curls enclosed within a raised border. A notable feature of the heads is the incised lineament, which is so fine it requires a magnifying glass to appreciate fully. The interior areas of the ears, snouts, and jaws are filled with a dense grid pattern of hatching, while lines in a twisted rope pattern outline the contours of the mouths. These lines function like shading, modeling and accentuating those features of the animals' faces that stand in high relief. The surfaces of the arc have been polished to a high luster.

The luster, color, and workmanship of this piece characterize it as a product of the region around the late Chou capital near Lo-yang (see Lawton, no. 85).

1985.214.98

(Illustrated)

96. BELTHOOK

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.  
Jade, length  $1\frac{3}{8}$  in. (4.2 cm.)

The sturdy, curved body of this small belthook is rectangular with a rounded butt. Indentations mark the slightly tapered hook end. The top face of the rectangular body is covered with a regular network of interlocking raised spirals and incised lines. These are enclosed within a plain border that also serves to demarcate the junction of the body with the unornamented stem. The stem tapers off toward the hook, which is shaped as a feline head with the ears in high relief and with round, protruding eyes. Eyebrows and whiskers are delineated with incised lines. Incised lines define the eyebrows, neck, and profile of the ears, but the chamfered stem of the hook is plain. The back of the belthook and squarish button are unornamented. The top and sides of this grayish white, translucent jade have been polished to a lustrous finish.

1985.214.97

97. RING WITH INSERT

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.  
Jade, diameter  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. (3.8 cm.)

This piece of translucent, yellow-gray jade with russet veining and a patch of calcification is decorated on both sides with a similar design of spirals and C-curves carved in relief and randomly dispersed within the raised narrow rims of the inner and outer edges. In places, the curls are connected by incised lines. One side of the ring has a glossy finish and is further distinguished by four small lozenges covered with crosshatching that are more or less evenly spaced along the outer rim. The less polished side of the ring is pierced by three tiny conical perforations. These holes could have served to suspend the ring or to attach it to the pommel of a sword. The smooth edge of the ring has been polished to a glassy finish.

When the ring entered the Museum, it was inset with a yellow-brown jade disk with an overhanging lip that fit over the ring's raised inner rim so that the assemblage resembled a pommel ornament. The top surface of the disk is ornamented with the design of a dragon. The large head and ill-defined body are carved in low relief above a crosshatched ground. Details of the dragon are delineated with incised lines that are often shallow or weakly drawn. The disparity in the colors of the two pieces, the ill-conceived design of the disk, and the fact that it was only held in place by wax suggest that it is a modern addition.

1985.214.106

98. HEAD OF A FANTASTIC ANIMAL

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.  
Jade, length  $1\frac{3}{8}$  in. (3.4 cm.)

This head has the massive features of a water buffalo without the horns and with prominent fangs protruding from the lower jaw. Two parallel bore-holes have been drilled in the polished flat surface behind each ear. A large piece of the lower half of the head has broken away, exposing the cylindrical cross sections of the holes as well as the broken tips of two jade pins that protrude from the holes. The flat back of the head and bore-holes suggest that the piece originally functioned as the end segment of a multisection jade belthook such as the type held together by iron pins in the Winthrop Collection, Harvard University (see Loehr, 1975, nos. 472–73).

1985.214.107

99. UNICORN (*BI-HSIEH*)

Eastern Chou or Western Han dynasty, 4th–2nd c. B.C.  
Jade, height  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. (6.4 cm.)

While most Eastern Chou and Han jade ornaments were created as pendants, a few also function as small, three-dimensional sculptures. One such example is this fabulous creature, resembling a cross between a tiger and a ram, carved from a pale gray-green jade with dark flecks. The feline head, with its gaping mouth and large fangs, is embellished with a goatlike beard and a single, curved horn that rests on the animal's back. Also goatlike are its hooves and kneeling posture. The animal's forelegs are tucked under its belly, while its hindlegs are poised as if it were preparing to stand up. The long, arched neck, compact torso, and long tail with its curled tip, however, are more reminiscent of a tiger than a ram. The piece can be suspended from a cord through the looped tail, but it is clearly seen to best advantage when viewed as a work of sculpture, one that possesses a monumentality belying its small size.

A finial surmounted by an almost identical animal and reported by White as coming from the area around Lo-yang is now in the Winthrop Collection, Harvard University (see White, no. 320, pl. 130; Loehr, 1975, no. 445).

Published: Salmony, pl. 25:2.

1985.214.100

(Illustrated, page 65)

# 100, 101. SCABBARD SLIDE AND CHAPE

Eastern Chou or Western Han dynasty, 4th–2nd c. B.C.  
Agate, slide (.104): length 2 in. (5.1 cm.); chape (.105):  
width  $2\frac{1}{16}$  in. (5.2 cm.)

This scabbard slide and chape are both carved from the same type of reddish banded agate and probably form a set. The chape has a flaring trapezoidal outline and lenticular cross section. The vertical edges are chamfered. The top of the chape has two vertical bore-holes by which it was attached to the scabbard. The unornamented surfaces are highly polished.

The rectangular slide is pierced by a horizontal slot. The edges of the slide, bottom and top, are rounded. The only ornamentation is a single incised line along each vertical edge. The exposed surfaces of the slide have been polished to a glassy finish.

1985.214.104,105

# 102. SCABBARD SLIDE

Eastern Chou or Western Han dynasty, 4th–2nd c. B.C.  
Jade, length  $2\frac{5}{16}$  in. (5.8 cm.)

This elegant slide is carved from a pale green and brown mottled piece of jade and polished to a brilliant luster. A feline creature clings with twin-taloned claws to its forward edge. The animal's long, twisted tail with plumed flourish loops across the broad, geometrically patterned surface of the slide. The beast's elongated trunk curves around the back and reemerges through the top of the slide so that the creature forms a loop, its neck touching the haunch of its hindleg.

Published: Salmony, pl. 16:4.

1985.214.102



No. 103

# 103. SCABBARD CHAPE

Western Han dynasty, 2nd–1st c. B.C.  
Jade, width  $2\frac{5}{8}$  in. (6.7 cm.)

This buff-gray jade with veins of blackish brown has the usual flaring trapezoidal outline and lenticular cross section of late Chou and Han scabbard chapes; what sets it apart is the playful winged feline clinging to its surface. The two broad faces of the chape are differently decorated. One face is ornamented with widely spaced and slightly raised angular spirals outlined by engraved lines and framed by an unornamented border. Engraved-line eyes in each of the four corners transform the spirals into stylized faces. The design on the other side shows the neck and head of a bird together with an array of hooked bands that resemble stylized tail feathers. The bands are slightly raised and crossed at regular intervals by incised, curved double lines. A winged feline carved in high relief wraps around the lower right corner of this side, with the twin-taloned paws of its left fore and rear legs gripping the other side. The animal has a pyramidal horn rising between two squarish ears, round, protruding eyes, and a winglike projection extending over its body from behind its left foreleg. Like the plumage motif on the side of the chape, this wing consists of two raised bands crossed by curved double lines. The curved tail of the beast rests on the bottom of the chape opposite an openwork, S-shaped arabesque. The top of the chape is smooth except for a single, cylindrical socket by which the chape was attached to the scabbard.

A horn-shaped jade cup excavated from the tomb of the second king of Nan Yüeh (died ca. 128–117 B.C.) located in Hsiang-kang-shan, Kuang-chou (Canton) is embellished with raised bands crossed at intervals by double incised lines very similar to those defining the wing and feather motifs on this chape (see *K'ao ku* 1984/3, pl. 4:1). Chapes showing felines crawling freely across their surfaces in the same manner as this example have been excavated from the tomb of Liu Sheng (died 113 B.C.; see *Man-ch'eng Han mu fa ch'ieh pao kao*, pl. 64:3,4) and from an Eastern Han tomb located in Jung-yüan, Ch'ang-sha, Hunan (see *K'ao ku t'ung hsün* 1958/5, p. 13, fig. 3).

Published: Jayne, no. 119; Salmony, pl. 16:3.

1985.214.103

(Illustrated)





No. 104

#### 104. SCABBARD SLIDE

Han dynasty, 2nd c. B.C.–1st c. A.D.  
Jade, length  $4\frac{5}{8}$  in. (11.7 cm.)

This large slide, carved from mottled buff jade and polished to a lustrous finish, is unornamented except for three felines sculpted in high relief on its top surface. Like the creature on number 102 (see above), these animals have feline heads, hatchmarks delineating the fur fringe on their legs, twin-taloned claws, and long, twisted tails with curled tips. The largest of the three has a bifurcated tail with a prominent plumed flourish; the smallest has an elongated, trunklike nose. All three creatures contort themselves elegantly, their necks and torsos boldly curved. They form a playful family grouping with the largest beast in the middle confronting the smallest face-to-face while attempting to wrap its tail around the torso of the middle-sized feline. This medium-sized animal eludes encirclement by dipping below the surface of the slide and clutching at the other's tail with its left paw and jaws.

A scabbard slide with similar feline ornamentation on its top surface was excavated from the tomb of Liu Sheng, Prince Ching of the Chung-shan Kingdom, who died in 113 B.C. (see *Man-ch'eng Han mu fa ch'üeh pao kao*, vol. 1, p. 104, fig. 70, vol. 2, pl. 64:5). Another slide of a similar mottled jade and carved with nearly identical felines was excavated in 1981 from an Eastern Han tomb located near Nan-ch'ang, Kiangsi (see *K'ao ku* 1981/5, pl. 10:4).

Published: *An Exhibition of Chinese Archaic Jades*, pl. 58:7; Salmony, pl. 16:3.

1985.214.101

(Illustrated)

#### 105, 106. PAIR OF POSTS

Han dynasty  
Jade, length  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. (8.3 cm.)

Both of these posts have the same tripartite elevation. The upper half consists of an octagonal column bounded at the top by a single concave band and at the bottom by a double concave band. Below the double band, each post assumes the form of an inverted flower bud with four pendant petals carved in low relief. The petals enclose a cylindrical base. This base has a constricted waist and a flaring foot with a flat bottom. A vertical bore-hole has been drilled into the top of each post. The posts most likely served as legs of a vessel or small piece of furniture, but similarly shaped bronze pieces served as finials on the struts of chariot parasols (see Umehara, 1937, pl. 92).

1985.214.108,109



Nos. 107 (left), 108 (center), 109 (right)

### 107–109. THREE ORNAMENTAL PLAQUES

Sung dynasty or earlier

Amber, phoenix plaques: length  $3\frac{3}{8}$  in. (8.5 cm.); feline plaque: length  $1\frac{1}{16}$  in. (4 cm.)

This set of three carved ambers consists of a matching pair of phoenixes and a square plaque ornamented with a fabulous single-horned feline. The highly compressed, mirror-image poses of the two phoenixes reflect the rectangular form of the amber pieces from which they were carved. Each phoenix has a sharply backward-bent head, short, clipped wings set at right angles to one another, and a long plumed tail carved in openwork. Beveled lines of varying widths delineate the feathers of the wings, topknot, and tail, while the swollen neck and head are plain except for the long, slender eye and a tiny circular perforation just above the beak. The beak and feet of each bird have been broken off, suggesting that the pieces once were fastened to a comb or hairpin along that edge.

The front face of the rectangular plaque is ornamented in high relief with a fabulous beast distin-

guished by its long, pointed mane and single, curved horn. The broad head, with its large, curled ears and feline eyes and muzzle, sits atop a long neck, twisted so that the nose of the beast touches the tip of the wing growing out of the front shoulder. The animal strides across abstract cloud scrolls on powerful feline legs ending in twin-taloned claws. The flat back of this plaque has been pierced by several conical perforations to enable it to be secured to a backing.

The rectangular plaque provides the strongest clue as to how to date these ambers. The *ch'ih* dragon ornamenting its surface is a Sung dynasty archaistic revival of Han feline forms (see no. 104). The characteristics of the two phoenixes—their large heads, thick necks, and elaborate tails—also appear to postdate T'ang examples (see *K'ao ku* 1965/6, p. 299, fig. 15).

1985.214.110–112

(Illustrated)

#### 110. BEAD

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.

Glass, height  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (2.3 cm.)

The flattened top and bottom of this spheroid bead are perforated by a cylindrical hole. A double row of white glass dots forms a diamond pattern that covers the blue glass-paste surface of the bead. Circles of white glass mark the corners of each diamond. The spaces in the center of this diamond pattern are ornamented with “eyes” made up of four concentric circles of white glass with the innermost circle filled with a yellow-buff paste.

This style of “eye” bead closely copies Middle Eastern beads (see Seligman and Beck) but can be distinguished chemically from Western prototypes by the presence of barium. Numerous such beads have been discovered in tombs datable to either the late Spring and Autumn period or the Warring States period (see *Wen wu* 1985/12, pp. 54–65 and figs. 7,8).

1985.214.113

#### 111. BEAD

Eastern Chou dynasty, 5th–3rd c. B.C.

Glass paste over a pottery core, height  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in. (2.8 cm.)

The ovoid body of this bead is covered with a light-blue ground dotted with a dense field of diagonally arrayed raised circles. Each circle is built up of white paste overlaid with a central dot of blue and a double ring of red. The vertical axis of the bead is pierced by a cylindrical perforation surrounded by a collar of white paste with blue lozenges.

1985.214.114

#### 112. HORSE

Han dynasty

Glass, length  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in. (4.4 cm.)

This transparent, pale-yellow piece of glass has been carved in the form of a kneeling horse. Aiming to capture the idea as much as the image of a horse, this archaic sculpture superimposes certain exaggerated features onto a generalized body. Most prominent is the oversized head, which rests on the outstretched front legs. Turned to the right, the head is perpendicular to the body, emerging like a bas-relief from the massive neck. The erect ears, bulging eyes, widely flaring nostrils, and eyebrows, which converge to become the bony bridge of the nose, are all presented in relief, while the back of the head merges with the neck in a single smooth surface. The backbone and mane are defined by a continuous sharp ridgeline. A second prominent feature of the sculpture is the powerfully arching neck, which is accentuated by vertical hatchmarks along the horse's right side that suggest the mane. The separation between the head and the chest is im-

precisely suggested by a circular perforation. Exaggerated prominence has also been given to the horse's right hind leg. The enormous haunch, attenuated lower leg, and large hoof have been sculpted in bold relief. Illogically, the rear legs are shown as if the animal were attempting to raise itself while the front legs are extended in a reclining posture. The remainder of the body is only sketchily defined: the bottom of the belly has been flattened to create a stable base, while the vaguely defined horse's tail merely serves as a foil to the rear leg.

A spectrographic analysis of the horse reveals that it contains almost no barium—a common component of early Chinese glass—but shows the presence of a significant amount of potassium, an element that is also present in early Chinese excavated pieces.

During the Han dynasty, fabled steeds were celebrated in jade, stone, bronze, and clay; in both its archaic style and its technique of workmanship, this powerful image, probably a depiction of a legendary *t'ien ma*, or “heavenly horse,” belongs to the Han dynasty.

1985.214.115

(Illustrated)



No. 112

# BONE



No. 113 (detail)

### 113. HAIRPIN

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bone, length  $6\frac{5}{16}$  in. (16 cm.)

The tapered shaft of this hairpin is grasped in the jaws of an animal head with a huge leaf-shaped ear. The head is embellished with a ground of finely incised lines that sets off the unornamented surfaces of the eye, fangs, and raised border of the ear. This border is further accentuated by flanges pierced by small holes to form a fringe of hooks. The center of the ear has a hook-shaped cutout that further enhances the filigree-like quality of the carving.

Several nearly identical hairpins were excavated in 1976 from the tomb of the Shang royal consort Fu Hao (see *Yin hsü Fu Hao mu*, pl. 180:1).

1985.214.116

(Illustrated, page 18; detail, page 75)



No. 115

### 114. HAIRPIN FINIAL

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bone, height  $1\frac{1}{16}$  in. (4.3 cm.)

This profile figure of a bird is dominated by a large head with a curved beak, circular eye perforation, and prominent pair of L-shaped crests. The wings and curled tail are composed of a single recumbent C-scroll emphasized by a central raised band. This band as well as the beak, crests, and the negative space of the eye is set off by a ground of beveled facets that suggest overlapping feathers. Other details have been added by incised lines; drilled perforations have been used to model the coiled tail and taloned feet. A tubular socket attached to the underside of the tail and decorated with raised spirals provided the means by which the finial was attached to the hairpin shaft.

A similar finial on a small bone knife was discovered in the tomb of the Shang royal consort Fu Hao (see *Yin hsü Fu Hao mu*, pl. 38:3).

1985.214.117

(Illustrated)



No. 114

### 115. EARSPOON IN THE FORM OF A LIZARD

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bone, length  $3\frac{1}{8}$  in. (7.9 cm.)

This figure of a lizard, carved from a slender piece of bone, has a flat bottom and a convex back with a sharply defined median crest. The lizard's open mouth has been created by a deep saw cut, but the lower jaw is now missing because of the loss of a thin layer of bone from the underside. The top surface of the body is covered with parallel longitudinal rows of beveled cuts that suggest scales. Incised lines also define the round eyes, eyebrows, nostrils, and L-shaped hooks on the lizard's stubby, protruding legs. The long, narrow tail, which more than doubles the lizard's length, is unornamented. The flattened end has a rounded, up-turned tip and a slightly concave cross section that permits the object to serve as an earspoon.

A bone knife carved with a similar profile image of a lizard was excavated from the tomb of the Shang royal consort Fu Hao (see *Yin hsü Fu Hao mu*, pl. 38:3).

1985.214.118

(Illustrated)



No. 116

#### 116. TIGER

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bone, length  $1\frac{1}{16}$  in. (4.3 cm.)

This ingenious profile figure of a crouching tiger has been carved from a long, rectangular piece of bone. Protruding ears, swayed back, and tapered tail ending in a curl enliven the top contour; angular saw cuts outline the crouching legs and separate them from the tail, belly, and chin. A drilled perforation at the end of the tail creates its curled tip. The body of the tiger is embellished with a variety of incised lines that suggest its striped coat.

1985.214.119

(Illustrated)

#### 117. CARVED BONE FRAGMENT

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bone, length  $4\frac{5}{8}$  in. (11.7 cm.)

The top surface of this fragment is intricately worked with a design of lizards and serpents carved in low relief against a ground of finely incised angular coils. The fragment is dominated by the large profile image of an animal. It has the clawed legs, leaf-shaped ears, and muzzle of a tiger attached to the body and broad, pointed tail of a lizard. Below the front leg and belly of this lizard is the figure of a serpent. The tail of another lizard and the head of a second serpent are visible directly in front of the first lizard's open mouth. Below both lizard tails are small, upside-down depictions of dragons. The reverse side of the fragment is more simply decorated with two incised-line depictions of profile dragons that are arrayed, one behind the other, along the long axis.

The object from which this fragment comes was most likely a spatula. Bone spatulas were common in Shang times, and several intact examples have been excavated from the tomb of the Shang royal consort Fu Hao (see *Yin hsü Fu Hao mu*, pl. 179:1).

1985.214.120

(Illustrated, page 79 top)

#### 118. FRAGMENT OF A SPATULA

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bone, length  $2\frac{1}{4}$  in. (5.7 cm.)

This fragment tapers gently from the long, straight top edge toward the broken narrow end. The faces of the fragment are ornamented with designs carved in low relief against a ground of finely incised angular coils. The front face shows two frontal animal masks, the large mask on top. Each mask is identically detailed with bovine horns, circular irises, and a snout articulated with deeply excavated recesses. The upper mask has a single chip of turquoise set into one of these recesses, suggesting that all of the deeply carved portions of the design were originally inlaid. The reverse side of the fragment shows a stylized dragon as well as the head of a second dragon, both drawn in profile and arrayed, one behind the other, along the long axis.

The shape of this fragment closely resembles the decorated end of a bone spatula excavated from the tomb of the Shang royal consort Fu Hao; an even closer parallel is a fragment from the same tomb similarly ornamented with superposed animal masks (see *Yin hsü Fu Hao mu*, pls. 179:1 and 183:1).

1985.214.121

(*Illustrated, page 79 bottom left*)

#### 119. FRAGMENT OF A SPATULA

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bone, length  $2\frac{11}{16}$  in. (6.8 cm.)

The surfaces of this fragment are ornamented with designs carved in low relief against a ground of incised angular coils. The front face shows a standing bird with a curved beak, barbed topknot, and hooked tail. The curved tail of a second bird is visible above the lower bird's head. The reverse side of the fragment shows a stylized profile image of a dragon. The bottom of the fragment is pierced by a small, circular perforation.

The shape of this fragment closely resembles the decorated end of a bone spatula similar to those excavated from the tomb of the Shang royal consort Fu Hao (see no. 118, above).

1985.214.122

(*Illustrated, page 79 bottom right*)

#### 120. FRAGMENT OF A SPATULA

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bone, length  $4\frac{5}{8}$  in. (11.7 cm.)

In its shape, decoration, and carving style this fragment closely resembles no. 118 (see above) except that more of the design has been preserved. The design is divided into three registers. The trapezoidal panel on the front face is ornamented with four superposed animal masks, each larger than the preceding one, while on the reverse side this panel is filled with three dragons drawn in profile, one behind the other. Only the head of the third dragon is depicted.

Below the trapezoidal panels both sides of the fragment are identically decorated. The narrowest point of the bone is girdled by a horizontal frieze filled with spiral whorls. The lowest register consists of a continuous frieze of pendent blades.

This fragment closely resembles a decorated bone spatula excavated from the tomb of the Shang royal consort Fu Hao (see *Yin hsü Fu Hao mu*, pl. 179:1).

1985.214.124

(*Illustrated, page 79 center*)

#### 121. SOCKETED FINIAL

Shang dynasty, 13th–11th c. B.C.

Bone or ivory, length  $2\frac{1}{16}$  in. (5.3 cm.)

This columnar finial consists, at the top, of a collar with an everted rim, a pair of back-to-back animal masks carved in high relief in the center, and a stem at the bottom. Each mask has a pair of large, leaf-shaped ears, incised, parallelogram eyes, and a broad snout flanked by profile images of the beast's open mouth and lower jaw. The lower edges of the snouts and jaws form a flat lip that overhangs the rectangular stem. Square in cross section and only roughly finished, this stem was clearly made to be inserted into another object. What makes this finial remarkable is the expertly drilled conical socket, piercing the piece from top to bottom. The wider opening of the perforation is at the collar end. The fine grain of the finial, now olive green due to the staining of bronze corrosion products, suggests that it is ivory.

1985.214.123



Nos. 117 (top), 118 (bottom left), 119 (bottom right), 120 (center)



## 122, 123. DRAGON-HEAD FINIALS

Han dynasty

Bone, length  $2\frac{3}{16}$  in. (5.9 cm.)

Each of these finials is identically carved in the form of a dragon head. Viewed in profile, the gaping mouth is defined by a large circular perforation. The stylized face of the dragon, carved into the top surface of the upper jaw, is dominated by a raised central ridge that forks below the eyes into a bifurcated nose bridge.

Three transverse grooves cut across the lower portion of the nose; two deeply drilled circular holes define the nostrils. Above the sunken circular eyes, several cursory transverse cuts define the forehead, while deep cuts on either side model the brows and ears. Traces of cinnabar accent the nostrils, eyes, and ears. The underside of the sturdy lower jaw is articulated by two longitudinal grooved lines. Each dragon head is joined at the back to a cylindrical tube.

These fittings, much like the bird-head finials catalogued above (see nos. 54, 55), probably served as finials on the projecting spines of a parasol.

1985.214.125,126

## 124. BELTHOOK

Western Han dynasty

Bone, length  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in. (14 cm.)

This piece defines an elegant curve formed by the rectangular stem, rounded, humplike central section, and flattened butt. The circular button is attached to the flat underside opposite the crest of the central hump. The top of the belthook is carved with low-relief designs and incised patterns culminating in a vividly sculpted animal-head butt with pointed ears, curved horns, and a rounded muzzle with lips parted to reveal a row of teeth with fangs at either side. Old photographs of the piece show that the now missing hook was originally shaped as an animal head.

This belthook, both in its silhouette and in the form of its animal-head butt, recalls the Western Han belthook catalogued above (see no. 71) and probably dates to the same period.

1985.214.127

# CERAMIC



No. 127



No. 125

# 125. INCENSE BURNER

Western Han dynasty, 2nd–1st c. B.C.  
Earthenware, height 6¼ in. (15.9 cm.)

The hemispherical bowl of this censer is supported by three crouching bears. Each of these identical, mold-made animals supports the bowl with its back and raised left front paw, while the right paw clings to the lower jaw of the gaping mouth. The interior of the bears' mouths and ears are painted with red pigment. A band of red, now largely flaked off, also encircles the top edge of the bowl just below the indented rim. The conical lid is sculpted to resemble a fantastic mountain landscape inhabited by a bear, a tiger, a boar, and a horse, all molded in relief. Eight circular perforations in the lid enabled incense to escape the vessel, much

like misty vapors emanating from clefts in a rock. Traces of red and white pigments show that the lid was once elaborately painted.

This censer mimics the form of Han bronze censers, most notably one excavated from the tomb of Prince Liu Sheng (died 113 B.C.) in Man-ch'eng, Hopeh (see Fong, no. 95). A similar ceramic example, with a conical foot rather than legs, was excavated from a late Western Han tomb discovered near P'ing-chi-pao, Ninghsia (see *Wen wu* 1978/8, p. 90, fig. 7).

1985.214.129

(Illustrated)

## 126. BOTTLE VASE

Six Dynasties period, 6th c.

Stoneware with olive-green glaze, height 9 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (25 cm.)

The bottle has a buff stoneware body with a finely crackled olive-green glaze that covers all but the base and footrim. Modeled after a bronze form of Indian origin (see nos. 15, 16), the vessel rises from a solid, circular foot into an elongated, ovoid body with a long, tapered neck and a flaring mouth. The body is decorated with incised lines and stamped patterns organized into two horizontal registers around the vessel shoulder. The lower register is filled with a stamped foliage pattern. The repeating image consists of a spray of five leaves and two curled tendrils symmetrically arrayed around a central stalk. In the wide upper register the image of a kneeling or dancing figure alternates with vertical bands of parallel incised lines. Above this register is a collar with an incised cusped border. The neck itself is given special prominence by the continuous spiral indentation created in the process of raising the neck on the potter's wheel. The viscous glaze appears darker where it has collected inside this concave depression and in the incised and stamped designs.

A vessel of nearly identical shape but with a yellowish glaze was excavated from one of several tombs discovered near Lan-ni-ch'ung, Ch'ang-sha, Hunan, dated 499 (see *Wen wu ts'an k'ao tzu liao* 1957/12, p. 44). The olive-green glaze on the Erickson piece, however, links it to celadons excavated in the north, notably at Ching Hsien, Hopeh, from the Northern Ch'i-period tomb of a member of the Feng family who died in 565 (see *K'ao ku t'ung hsün* 1957/3, pp. 28–37).

Published: Katz, no. 33.

1985.214.130

(Illustrated, page 6)

## 127. LION HEAD

Northern Sung dynasty (960–1126)

Ting ware, porcelain with khaki-tinted glaze, height 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (11.1 cm.)

This powerful head of a lion, although only a fragment, remains an arresting example of ceramic sculpture. The basic features of the head and remnants of the torso—the bulging eyes, gaping mouth, fringe of hair around the lower jaw, and the rounded, fleshy contours of the muzzle, eyebrows, forehead, and shoulder—are modeled, in high relief or with incised lines, from a single piece of clay. Other pieces of clay have been added to the head to form the mane, ears, tongue, and teeth. The ears, nostrils, and back of the mouth have been pierced with circular perforations.

Although the piece was formerly dated to the T'ang dynasty, Suzanne Valenstein has convincingly demonstrated that the hard, white body and slightly khaki-colored glaze of the lion make it a rare example of Ting-ware ceramic sculpture, perhaps once part of a pillow, that dates to the Northern Sung dynasty.

1985.214.131

(Illustrated, page 81)

## 128. BOWL

Northern Sung dynasty, 10th–11th c.

Ting-ware type, porcelain with ivory glaze, diameter 7 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (18.1 cm.)

This shallow bowl takes the form of an inverted cone truncated at the bottom, where it is supported by a narrow footring. Six indentations along the rim correspond to creases in the flaring sides. Since the piece was fired upside down, the ivory glaze covers all but the inside of the foot and the rim of the mouth, which has been ground down to the line of the glaze.

For a similar example see Lindberg, no. 61, pl. 67.

1985.214.134

## 129. DISH

Northern Sung dynasty, 11th–12th c.

Ting ware, porcelain with incised designs, diameter 10 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (26.4 cm.)

The curved sides of this large, deep dish rise from a narrow footring. Around the foot the slightly khaki-colored glaze has not completely covered the white body; elsewhere, the glaze has left characteristic tear marks on the underside, indicating that the piece was fired on its everted lip, now rimmed in copper. The decoration of the dish consists of a large rondel at the center of the interior filled with an incised design of a three-clawed dragon chasing a flaming pearl.

A dish of almost identical size, shape, and design was formerly in the Mayer Collection (see *The Frederick M. Mayer Collection*, no. 33). A somewhat smaller Ting yao dish in the Kempe Collection is incised with a very similar dragon design (see Lindberg, no. 62, pls. 68, 69).

1985.214.133



No. 130

### 130. PILLOW

Chin dynasty, late 12th–early 13th c.

Tz'u-chou ware, stoneware painted in black on white slip, width 16½ in. (41 cm.)

This large pillow has a gray, stoneware body covered on the top and sides by a white slip and decorated with an underglaze blackish brown iron pigment. The slanted, slightly concave top of the pillow has a cloud, or *ju-i* fungus, shape and a lip that slightly overhangs the lobed sides and slightly flared foot. The top surface of the pillow has been treated like a Sung fan painting: a border of broad and narrow lines encloses a depiction of a pond with low banks and water grasses. Two waterfowl are shown fleeing a hawk. The sides of the pillow are decorated with a boldly drawn frieze of half-palmette scrolls. The flat base is solid, but there is a circular perforation just below the overhanging lip at the back. A three-character mark, *Chang chia tsao*, "made by the Chang Family," is stamped into the base.

Both the *Chang chia tsao* mark and the tall water grasses appear on shards excavated from Tung-ai-k'ou in the Han-tan area of Hopeh (see *Wen wu* 1964/8, pl. 6:4 and p. 46, fig. 24).

Published: Mino, pl. 49.

1985.214.132

(Illustrated)

### 131. FOLIATE DISH

Yüan dynasty (1279–1368)

Chün ware, porcelaneous stoneware with blue glaze, diameter 5 in. (12.7 cm.)

This small dish has a brownish body covered with a thick light-blue glaze filled with bubbles and crazed with an irregular crackle pattern. The shallow body, molded into the form of an eight-petaled lotus, is supported by a narrow footring with an indented interior. The area around the foot is largely unglazed.

1985.214.135

# PAINTING AND SCULPTURE



No. 135 (detail)



No. 132

### 132. SEATED BUDDHA WITH TWO LIONS

Northern Wei dynasty, late 5th–early 6th c.  
Limestone, height 17  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (45 cm.)

This sculpture, assembled from more than a dozen fragments, has a rough back, which shows that it was removed from the wall of a cave. The figure is shown seated with crossed ankles and knees widely parted. The left hand rests on the left knee, palm down with the thumb and the index and little fingers extended while the third and fourth fingers are bent under the palm. The right hand is raised in front of the chest, palm out, with the fingers in the same positions as those of the left hand. The exact significance of these gestures is unclear. The elongated torso and neck culminate in a long, narrow head topped by a high crown adorned with the image of a Buddha seated in a niche. The features of the face are stylized and exaggerated: sharply creased and slanted eyebrows; large, pendulous ears; tiny, pursed lips; and prominent cheekbones and chin. The figure is cloaked in a tunic with short, flaring sleeves and a pleated *dhoti* that clings to the legs and cascades to either side, where it ends in a series of angular folds. The ends of two scarves that fall from the shoulders and crisscross in the lap are draped across

the forearms. The figure is flanked by two lions, one missing its body and tail. Below the figure's toes is the pointed tip of a lotus bud-shaped incense burner.

This figure probably represents Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future. The geometric quality of the figure's pose, emphasized by the angular, crossed legs, crisscrossing scarves and patternized, pleated draperies—all features that in turn deemphasize the physicality of the body while focusing attention on the mystically smiling face—are characteristic of Northern Wei sculptures created shortly after the Wei capital was moved to Lo-yang in 495. A monumental figure of Maitreya of similar date and pose from the Yun-kang cave temples near Ta-t'ung, Hopeh, is already in the Museum's collection (see Hearn and Fong, fig. 56). Unlike that figure, this small sculpture is carved from the dark limestone characteristic of the Lung-men cave temples just outside Lo-yang, Honan. Similar figures of Maitreya flanked by lions are found in the Ku-yang cave at Lung-men, which was decorated during the reigns of the Northern Wei rulers Hsiao Wen-ti and Hsiao Ming-ti (r. 488–528; see *Lung-men shih k'u*, figs. 15, 18).

1985.214.139

(Illustrated)





辛巳秋  
日寫於石  
秀齋中

雲  
風

雲從脚裏出  
雨從掌中傾  
此情雖似古人  
所云雲從足下生  
雨從掌中降  
見之於前山陽也  
休養齋記



133. T'ANG TI, ca. 1296–1364

From Wu-hsing, Chekiang Province

*Landscape After a Poem by Wang Wei*

Dated 1323

Hanging scroll, ink and light colors on silk, 50¾ x 27¼ in.  
(128.9 x 69.2 cm.)

Artist's inscription, two lines in running script: "In spring, the third month of the third year of the Chih-chih reign period [April 4–May 5, 1323], T'ang Ti, Tzu-hua, of Wu-hsing painted this picture after the poetic idea of Mo-chieh [Wang Wei, 699–759]; [followed by two artist's seals, T'ang Ti (square, relief), T'ang shih Tzu-hua (square, relief)]."

Collectors' seals: one seal of An Ch'i (1683–after 1743); five seals of Chang Heng (1915–63); three seals of T'an Ching (20th c.); three seals unidentified.

This conservative interpretation of the characteristic Northern Sung "level distance and old trees" composition is dominated by a foreground grove juxtaposed against a deeply receding, watery plain. The trees and adjacent rock outcrop are surrounded by a series of low banks. On one of these, a servant boy carries a bundle toward a seated gentleman holding a staff. A much smaller middle-ground grove and a distant ridge of mountains define the scale of the desolate plain. By sharply tilting the ground plane, T'ang Ti exaggerates the impression of the trees' great height, adding to their expressive power.

Published: Cheng Chen-to, pl. 32; *Chung kuo ming hua*, 33, pl. 7; Lee and Ho, no. 220; Hartman, p. 219 and fig. 8.

1985.214.147

(Illustrated, page 87; detail, page 24)

and painting brought about a revival [of those arts] in our district. Even Hsüan-tsai [Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, 1555–1636] was one of those who followed him. Although this painting follows Ta-ch'ih [Huang Kung-wang, 1269–1354], its layered peaks and piled-up cliffs display vigorous brush and ink. Today, we drifters meet: seeing this [painting] is like hearing the [sad melodies] of the Yang Mountain flute. Inscribed by Ch'en Chi-ju [followed by one seal, Mei-kung (square, relief)]."

No collectors' seals.

The rounded, earthen hummocks defined by softly rubbed "hemp-fiber" texture strokes (*p'i-ma ts'un*), the flat-topped promontories, the varied trees, houses, and foliage dots are all motifs derived from the Yüan master Huang Kung-wang and Huang's early Ming follower Shen Chou (1427–1509). Mo Shih-lung's interpretation shows a less-varied use of ink tonalities than these earlier masters, but he introduces a new clarity of structure. The composition presents a clear progression of mountain forms that repeat and build in size and height from foreground to background, culminating in an S-shaped ridge that winds backward to a towering, distant peak. This massing of forms into larger compositional units was to be even further exploited by Mo's contemporary Tung Ch'i-ch'ang.

Published: *Chinese Paintings*, no. 21; Cahill, ed., no. 32; Cahill, pp. 85–86, pl. 34.

1985.214.148

(Illustrated, page 88)

134. MO SHIH-LUNG, ca. 1539–87

From Sung-chiang, Kiangsu Province

*Landscape in the Manner of Huang Kung-wang*

Dated 1581

Hanging scroll, ink and light colors on paper, 46⅞ x 16⅞ in. (119 x 41 cm.)

Artist's inscription, three lines in running script: "On an autumn day in the *hsin-ssu* year [1581], painted in the Shih-hsiu Studio, Yün-ch'ing; [followed by two artist's seals, Yün-ch'ing (round, relief), Mo shih T'ing-han (square, intaglio)]."

Colophon by Ch'en Chi-ju, 1558–1639, four lines in running script: "Mo T'ing-han's [Mo Shih-lung] calligraphy

壽星長壽



135. WANG TO, 1592–1652

From Meng-ching, Honan Province

*Mountain Landscape*

Dated 1651

Hanging scroll, ink on paper,  $46\frac{1}{8} \times 21\frac{5}{8}$  in. (117.1 x 54.9 cm.)

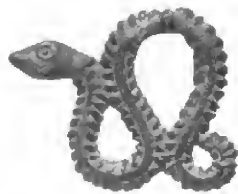
Three inscriptions by the artist. Two lines in running script (far left): “Painted on the twenty-third day of the third month of the *hsin-mao* year of the Shun-chih reign period [May 4, 1651], Wang To painted in Ch’ang-an [Peking] [followed by two artist’s seals, *Wang To chih yin* (square, relief) and *T’ai pao t’u shu* (square, relief)].” Four lines in running script: “The sixth day of the fourth month of the *hsin-mao* year [May 24, 1651]. Returning in the morning, I stopped by Mr. Hsien’s Pu Studio, drank with him, and promised him a painting. Today, all day and night I applied dots and washes to [finish] this painting, which I respectfully present to Master Hsien. [Beneath his previous inscription, Wang To also notes:] I wrote this [earlier] line in the third month.” Four lines in running script (far right): “Among the ten or more schools of painting, there is no single rule or theory on the method of *ts’un* [texture dots]. If you consider all the forms of ideographs, can there be agreement over one single precedent? This principle is very difficult so I record a summary here. Inscribed again in the early evening of the sixth day of the fourth month [May 24].”

One unidentified collector’s seal.

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(*Illustrated, page 90; detail, page 85*)



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